





The long shadow of Toxteth, Moss Side and Brixton stretched to Southampton last week when Mr Mark Carlisle addressed the annual meeting of the Council of Local Education Authorities. The Secretary of State clearly felt he had to relate his remarks to the recent riots.

Thoughtful and urbane as he is, Mr Carlisle knew better than to look for a single cause for the breakdown of social order. He did not make the elementary error of loading the blame on the schools. What he did say, however, went over some familiar ground about the schools' role in helping young people to establish sound moral values and identify with the common social and patriotic aims of a democratic country, governed by the rule of law.

According to Mr Carlisle's analysis - which makes no claim to originality - young people in riotous inner-city areas are alienated, believing "that their fellow citizens set no value on them" and that they "will not be able, or be given the chance, to make their mark and their contribution to society".

Mr Carlisle must know that desperation about jobs will not be removed by a teacher's pep-talk. A good school is all about the recognition of individual human value, and countless studies of which Professor Rutter's *Fifteen Thousand Hours* is only the most sophisticated, have shown that the pastoral and moral functions of the school are complementary to its capacity to promote learning. Whether the moral patterns developed as a by-product of good education are strong enough to prevent people from stealing from a broken shop front when normal conventions and sanctions of community life have broken down is another matter. The horrible experience of many cities throughout the world is that the skin of civilized behaviour is frighteningly thin.

None of which, of course, absolves the



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## Let them stay on - but where's the money?

schools from their responsibilities, though it may suggest that the politicians, too, have responsibilities for creating and influencing the social climate. It is unfortunately true that Mr Carlisle's party is led by an abrasive politician who is in no position to mobilise national unity because her stock-in-trade is a stubborn and uncompromising commitment to policies which, in the short term at least, fall heavily on the poor and the dispossessed while those in work and with property flourish. And Mr Foot is no more able to speak for England than Mrs Thatcher; he cannot even speak for the Labour Party.

More positively, Mr Carlisle used the occasion of his CLEA speech to talk about the need for more boys and girls to stay in school and college longer. This would have the doubly desirable effect of keeping more young people out of the labour market longer and increasing their knowledge and skill.

Unfortunately, many colleges of further education where a large proportion of these young people might expect to continue their education, are already unable to meet the demands on them. There have been reports from many parts of the country of colleges which have had to turn students away because they haven't the resources to meet their needs. When this was pointed out to Mr Carlisle - and contrasted with the cuts Mr Heseltine is calling for, especially among the cities where many FE colleges are situated - Mr Carlisle made it clear that he had no extra money to offer. Instead he implied that, since it was often among authorities which already spend most lavishly that these shortages are now reported, they might without too much difficulty redirect their spending to give greater priority to the would-be stayers-on.

This is another of the typically inconclusive policy arguments to which the present system

of indirect finance for education gives rise. What is beyond question is that a serious attempt should now be made to take advantage of present adversities to raise the level of any plan to increase youth opportunities and work experience. It needs a coordinated set of changes in the education system which would require (for once) the Department of Education and Science to pull together, and not to split up along the separate divisions of schools and FE. It would require the DES and the Department of Employment to keep together, too, so that the twin aims of keeping a larger fraction of the age-group within the education system, and of providing an effective training for school leavers, should be pursued in co-operation rather than competition. With the MSC currently negotiating in another large expansion of YOP, this becomes especially significant.

That is a topic to return to on another occasion. In the meantime, it is fair to at least say that Mr Carlisle intends to do for young people now excluded from FE because there is no room for them. It is no pleading powerlessness. His powers of persuasion are great and his direct control nowhere stronger than in FE. Somewhere between his glib phrases at Southampton and local authorities' instant rebuttals, there may be a way forward. There is not much doubt that this must involve more money for FE from which pocket it should come. It is immediately clear, but it will not do simply to the Secretary of State to blame the I.E.A.s for the I.E.A.s to blame the Minister for. Now is the time to make a move in the wake of the sequence of urban explosions which have suddenly brought home the stupidity of the danger of concentrating unemployment among the most volatile and potentially violent age groups in the community.

more careful consideration. Even allowing for the natural exaggeration of its pioneers, it could well prove one of the most interesting innovations of the eighties.

For a start it has behind it people like Peter Laslett and Michael Young, both founding fathers of that earlier ugly duckling, the Open University. More importantly there has been the spectacular success of the idea abroad.

Since the first university of the third age was started at Toulouse in 1973, the number has grown to 172, 62 of which are in France, the rest in countries as varied as Canada and Poland, Belgium and Switzerland. Thousands of pensioners now spend some of their long hours of retirement in academic study, or learning new sports and skills.

The precise way each "university" operates is left to the old themselves, and the purpose of the inaugural meeting on Monday was to appoint some of them to the Cambridge steering committee. Broadly speaking, the elderly ask local educational institutions, such as a university or college, to lend or hire them lecture rooms. They also sign up lecturers and teachers willing to do some teaching either free or for a small fee.

In France they have generally failed to encourage more of the elderly to undertake the teaching themselves, but this might be a useful goal for the Cambridge group to set themselves from the start. The Cambridge area must have plenty of retired teachers with time on their hands who would be happy to teach for an hour or two a week.

The old people also decide what courses are wanted and at what level, though in practice they are unlikely to have entry requirements or final examinations. The universities are universities in name only - they are not degree awarding bodies - and, fairly obviously, they offer education as an end in itself.

The Cambridge group are determined they should be self-financing. They aim to keep costs down, charge reasonable fees, apply for grants from charities and local well-wishers, and undertake orthodox fund-raising. By operating mainly on voluntary help, such a "university" should be able to keep free of the shackles of local government finance and it is this which gives it more hope than anything else in adult education at the moment.

Apart from that, how else would a pensioners' university differ from what is already on offer in adult institutes and classes? Is a new type of institution really necessary? Old people do have quite clearly defined needs which are not always met by existing provision. Some of them do not like being out in the evening, for example, when most orthodox adult education goes on. They have difficulty getting back to study after a working life without it, and a university of the third age would be well advised to follow the experience of the Open

University and set up a proper counselling system. More importantly a more informal system of this sort can work more liberally - some classes could be held in the home of the house-bound - and this would be greatly to the advantage of the old.

But even where the colleges and institutes are already meeting a need, their scale of operation is minute. A fifth of British population is now retired. Only 1 per cent of those over 60 take part in any kind of intellectual instruction, compared with far higher proportions abroad. It looks as if there is a huge unmet need, and at the same time, a contracting education system with spare resources. The universities of the third age seem an ideal way of marrying the two.

## Paying the piper

The House of Commons, on Tuesday, carried the motions introduced by Mr George Young, Secretary of State for Scotland, totalling £47 million off the rate support grant for Lothian, £2 million from Dundee, and £1m from Stirling. The Government have, therefore, stood by their threat to punish authorities which persist in their "overspend". Moreover, the 1981 Scottish Local Government Act, under which the action has been taken, enables the Scottish Office to stop an offending local authority from making good the loss of central government grant by pulling up the rates. In effect, the authority is given the choice of cutting its budget or going bankrupt.

In the war of nerves which the Government is waging with the local authorities, Scotland is being used as a means of stepping up the pressure. At present no legislation has been passed for England or Wales giving Mr Heseltine the powers now being used by Mr Young. But clearly, the threat is there to bring a similar legislation for south of the border if the big Labour-controlled authorities hold out.

Of course the local authorities will fight as hard as they can. With the plight of the inner cities back to the forefront of the public debate, it looks less and less likely that Mr Heseltine can afford his ultimate confrontation.

## No comment

"For the first time ever, the school has established a careers room. Granted it is a boys' school which has been camouflaged by considerable hard work by the careers mistress, but it has been used extensively and has become a central point for easy access to me when I am at school." From a Hampshire Careers Officer's report on work in one of her schools.

## Training course places for graduates set to be slashed

by Bert Lodge

Places on one-year teacher training courses for graduates are likely to be cut by almost 3,500 in October next year, following a meeting this week of the Advisory Committee on the Supply and Education of Teachers (ACSET). Courses in primary

teaching will suffer most. The committee was not expected to recommend any cuts in intake to the other route to the profession, the Bachelor of Education degree, but it is thought to have agreed to an overall cut of 10 per cent in the annual output of teachers for the rest of the 1980s. It is certain some local authorities will seek to close BED courses which have consistently recruited badly in recent years.

This year 10,700 students are on the postgraduate certificate of education course, almost 1,000 more than the target figure fixed in 1977. The cut recommended by an ACSET sub-committee is 25 per cent, for one year. To wipe out the 1,000 excess places tolerated for the past two years will require a cut of nearly 3,500 places compared with this year's total.

The reduction is an attempt by the committee at a short-term solution to the problem of surplus teachers, the consequence of over-optimistic forecasting by the DES in 1977. It was then estimated 17,000 teachers a year would be needed but in reality the need has turned out to be fewer than 10,000 by 1983, though vacancies are expected to increase after that to possibly 20,000 a year by 1990.

No long-term solution to the teacher surplus is expected from the committee before the autumn.

A decision to leave BED target figures alone is unsurprising after last year's dramatic fall in recruitment when over 40 per cent of the 7,500 target places on the three and four year courses remained empty. Figures this week from the clearing house which deals with applications show recruitment for this October

## 'Sixth form' plan goes to Carlisle

Birmingham's plan to scrap all of its sixth forms and replace them with seven "open access" colleges has been approved by the city's education committee. It is now with Mr Mark Carlisle, the Education Secretary, who must give his approval.

Under the plan, which would be implemented between 1982 and 1985, the city council would also cease to maintain six voluntary-aided grammar schools. The schools' governors have declared that they would become independent. In addition, Sutton Coldfield Girls' School would lose the selective status it regained just last year and, become a 12 to 16 comprehensive school.

Birmingham thus becomes the second major city to propose a complete break at 16 for all children in the maintained system. Manchester's tertiary plan is still being considered by ministers, who are expected to give their verdict within two or three weeks.

DES officials are believed to have advised ministers to accept Manchester's plan to replace 26 all-through comprehensives with 19 11-16 schools and three sixth-form colleges. However, it is far from certain that Mr Carlisle and Lady Young, the junior minister who normally decides on reorganization schemes, will agree that all Manchester's sixth forms should be scrapped.

In Birmingham, over 2,000 written protests at the reorganization scheme have been received by the city education department. But Dr Charles Gray, chairman of the education committee, said this week that most of them referred to the plan to cease to maintain the voluntary aided grammar schools.

## Teachers want more protection

New legislation is needed to give teachers greater protection against assault in the wake of increased violence against them, a conference was told last week.

Mr Ron Cocking, National Treasurer of the National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers, called for teachers to be given the right of access to an appeals procedure if a local education authority did not prosecute in a case where a teacher had been assaulted.

In addition, he told a conference organized by the TUC to discuss violence against staff in the public services that warning notices should be placed outside schools - in the same way as London Transport has placed notices on the underground system. They would tell trespassers they will be pursued through the courts if they refuse to leave the premises.

## Glowing report for the inspectors

Her Majesty's Inspectorate has passed the first stage of an examination of its activities with flying colours.

A report based on a six-month study of the Inspectorate by Mr Nicholas Stuart, a DES under-secretary, has praised every aspect of its work and recommended no major changes. However, the report has still to be approved by Sir Derek Rayner, the Prime Minister's watchdog on waste, who commissioned it. Both he and Mrs Thatcher are said to be taking a close personal interest in the matter.

## Register lengthens

The July unemployment figures published by the Department of Employment this week show a jump of nearly 75,000 in the number of school-leavers on the register, bringing the present total to just under 275,000. But 10,000 a week have been joining the Youth Opportunities Programme, which holds nearly 200,000 under 18s, and it is thought that a considerable number of youngsters who have left school in the past few weeks have not registered because they will not be eligible for supplementary benefit until September.

## Prior tackles Treasury hard-liners over jobless

by Biddy Passmore

Cabinet ministers were trying again this week to resolve a fierce dispute over measures to help the young unemployed.

Mr James Prior, Employment Secretary, has been fighting in Cabinet committee for the last three weeks for both short and long-term improvements to his schemes. First, he is pleading for an extra £100m on top of the £320m already allocated to the Youth Opportunities Programme this year.

This would raise the number of places on the scheme from 456,000 to 550,000 over the next year, enabling the Government to fulfil its pledges to offer a YOP place to all of this summer's unemployed school leavers by Christmas and to anyone under 18 who has been unemployed for three months. It would also give a second bite at the cherry to those who are still jobless after completing a YOP scheme.

In the wake of the riots, Treasury

ministers now accept that extra money must be found in the reserves to provide help for the inner cities. At least some expansion of YOP is therefore likely.

The hottest debate, however, centres around Mr Prior's long-cherished plan to expand the Youth Opportunities Programme, increase its training element, and allow it to form the basis of a training or apprenticeship scheme for all school-leavers - a plan which would cost at least £800m a year when in full operation. But he has been arguing that there would be savings in other areas, especially supplementary benefit.

He faces opposition from the Treasury and from colleagues in other departments who consider the Youth Opportunities Programme both bureaucratic and difficult to control. Rather than building on it, they would prefer to see specific aid to industry to encourage employers to take on more young people.

## Schools tighten the grip

Britain's secondary schools are placing more emphasis on mixed ability teaching and operate a tighter control of school work than ten years ago, a survey indicates.

More schools prepare pupils for O-levels and CSE exams, and there is more regular collecting of test marks, homework and school work more commonly assessed for each subject.

There are more rules regulating the general behaviour of children in classrooms and corridors. Although less often automatically sanctioned, persistent lateness more often leads to punishment.

These conclusions emerge from a survey reported in *Educational Research*. In 1968-69 a sample survey of 72 secondary schools was taken in the south-west of England, representative of the national distribution of schools.

Ten years later a follow-up survey was made, but because of the changing pattern of organisation - some schools had merged, some changed to comprehensive - only 45 were involved.

The survey points out that while it is not possible to say whether the changes might be typical of schools nationally, what have been reported are real changes that have occurred in real schools.

## Don't let your brain go on holiday!

The summer holidays are here again but we want you to put on your thinking cap and put the grey matter to work for the 1981 Brainwave Awards. This is your chance to come up with a really good idea for a product that could help you in teaching and - properly developed - could help thousands of other teachers and their classes.

There are seven categories to enter, with cash prizes of over £6,000 to be shared by the winners and their schools. The outright Brainwave winner and school will share £1,500 and a handsome trophy and certificate will be awarded to the overall winner. In addition each category winner and runner-up will be presented with a framed certificate.

If your brainwave is commercially viable, there is every chance that you will see it produced and marketed by Hestair Hope Limited. Naturally, you would benefit by the royalties.

The awards are sponsored by Hestair Hope Limited and The Times Educational Supplement. Entry forms are available from Hestair Hope Limited, St Philip's Drive, Royton, Oldham OL2 6AG. The closing date for entries is 30th September 1981.

## THE BRAINWAVE AWARDS 1981



# Platform

After the riots, which way forward? Trevor Phillips sees institutionalized race discrimination in Britain and Ronald Davie says schools can make a difference

## Bargain that has been betrayed

by Trevor Phillips

Toxith, it seems, has had at least one benefit for Whitehall: two of the most spectacularly unpopular Conservative ministers of recent times have been packed off to the North for two weeks. Younger civil servants fantasize that their masters will disappear in the wastes of Liverpool 8; but none of them believes that this particular expeditionary force will get anywhere near the truth about the causes of the recent street rioting.

Michael Heseltine has already jeopardized any possibility of community cooperation by neglecting to invite any black organizations to his initial consultations. But it is not just ineptitude that may obscure the real feelings of the young people who squared up against the police. It may well be that neither politicians nor commentators are prepared to let go of their own cherished nostrums for long enough to listen to the voices of the youths and their parents.

Already, two "explanations" have emerged. The first, rather predict-



Riot scene in Brixton: police seem to be representatives of a society that puts no value on blacks

able in a Britain deeply worried about its loss of status and power, is that of "moral degeneration". The popular view on my Bakerloo line train after Toxith and Brixton, was that if the parents kept the kids at home - like they did in "our" day - none of this would happen.

Mr Whitelaw only emphasized the silliness of this idea by suggesting that parents could be fined for their children's actions. Presumably, one could then issue a handbook entitled "Training your children in the Woodhouse Way". Unfortunately, this view has also led normally serious and sensible people to suggest that this is all the work of trained agitators, taking advantage of innocent and easily led young people.

The reaction to the representatives of the revolutionary left in Brixton

should disabuse anyone of the notion that young men with Marx on their minds could influence young blacks. Even the relatively moderate Labour Party Young Socialists, whose main asset, Bob Lee, is young and black himself, were politely told to "Piss off the Front Line, and don't come back".

The second explanation is a familiar one: that inner city decay, unemployment, poor social facilities have all played their part, especially when coupled with racial tensions and insensitive policing. Undoubtedly there is a great deal to support this analysis; but the simple statement that these factors led to the frustration that was shown on the streets leaves some puzzles to answer.

In Brixton, it was clear that the initiative was taken by young blacks.

But the unemployment figures do not demonstrate the massive disparity between black and white youth that many people hold to be the major problem. Black unemployment is about 2 or 3 per cent higher than the overall rate of 13 per cent; and among young people race does not significantly affect the relative rates of unemployment. Even accounting for non-registration and the large number of young blacks on YOP schemes, the lack of jobs does not, in itself, account for the youths' resentment.

A clue to the feelings of the youths lies in their total hostility to the police. One young black who had been out on the streets of Wood Green said to me, "Look, it isn't just them beating us. It's that they don't have any respect at all for black

people". To these children, many of them as young as 13, the police are to be the representatives of a society that puts no value on them, or the parents.

The feeling of being disrespected extends to daily life. An account from Guyana who has lived in London for five years recently told me with amazement that he had been abused by a trump in Leamington Square. When I said that desks abuse all kinds of people, black or white, he shook his head and said "No, I know it was because I'm black; and it's their attitude, and it makes them disregard us completely".

One result of this almost universal feeling among young blacks is a treat to some territory of their own where they hold some status irrespective of white judgment. The classroom is in dialect, impenetrable to white teachers. In Brixton is the Front Line where the unemployed youths and their friends are still in school, while on evenings and weekends "liming" in the old West Indian parlance. Southall is the Broadway, late at night, both the riots in these areas were triggered by the youths' desire to defend "their" territory from the police in Brixton and the skinheads in Southall.

In fact, this kind of entrepreneurship is not limited to the young. A factor in recent events was the reaction of black parents. Two years ago most West Indian parents would have been only too ready to be their own children for being wild and not diligent enough in the search for work. Now, most Brixton parents can quote a catalogue of disabilities that they have discovered in their children. "These children are British, but they don't study. The police got after them, they were downgraded, they said one mother after the other round of battles in Brixton. What does Mrs Thatcher expect?"

The parents' extreme bitterness lies in the feeling that they have sacrificed their own early expectations of a better life in Britain, when they discovered that life for black immigrants was to be at the bottom of the economic pile, they transferred their expectations to their children. The failure of West Indian British schools is a blow not just to the children, but the parents themselves. Many see it as their lifetime investment wasted; and the fault lies with British society, its institutions and its attitudes.

This sense of a contract with British society - do my dirty work and I'll see your kids OK has been instilled in black children. It is surprising that they now refuse to take the same kind of work that their parents took. The feeling of a bargain betrayed, that the social into which blacks came never, in any intention of admitting them, was their children as equals, is more than anything else, responsible for the mood of the black community.

Therefore, solutions which are based only on economic recovery, or simply social policy, will not fully comprehend "the problems of cities". There is a deeper psychological question at the heart of that lies the attitudes of whites towards blacks; not least the attitudes of political leaders of both parties.

Unless blacks do find some reason to believe that they have a prospect of being treated as equals, a further retreat to their "own" territory is inevitable. Ghettoes, separatism, and perpetual friction could be the pattern of the future.

Trevor Phillips is reporter on London Weekend Television programme Skin.

## Schools not up to scratch, say parents

by Biddy Passmore

A school that has not been decorated for 17 years is included in a dossier of complaints about Surrey schools which has been sent to Mr Mark Carlisle, the Education Secretary, by local parents.

The parents, who are supported by ACE, the educational pressure group, say their evidence proves that local schools are no longer up to legal standards. They want the Education Secretary to step in and force the education authority to meet its obligations.

This is the second general complaint about an education authority received by Mr Carlisle. He rejected similar allegations that Northamptonshire schools were below legal standards. However, the newly-elected Northamptonshire Council - which is no longer Conservative-controlled - has agreed to spend an extra £2.5m to make good the deficiencies in schools caused by cuts. Local parents say this proves their complaints were justified.

The Surrey evidence, collected by questionnaire and personal interview from 34 schools, shows increasing dependence on fund-raising, a serious shortage of textbooks and equipment for basic subjects and many schools in a bad state of repair. Teacher cutbacks have caused reductions in remedial education and arts education.

Many schools in the Guildford area have gone undecorated for 15 years, the dossier reveals, including one school that has not been decorated since it opened. One has not been decorated for 17 years - thus beating the "record" in the recent HMI report on the effect of cuts. Many have leaking roofs and rotting woodwork.

The authority is increasingly relying on parent teacher associations for funding essential repairs and on unpaid parental labour to maintain property, say the parents. And they say the failure of the authority to maintain its own schools is a clear breach of the 1944 Education Act.

On teachers, the parents say, "the security of posts, working in shabby conditions with tatty, worn-out and out-of-date books and an increasing reliance on duplicated materials are all taking their toll of staff morale."

## Minister's speech condemned

by Sarah Bayliss

Lady Young, the education minister, has been accused of falsely raising the expectations of parents of handicapped children in a speech to the British Dyslexia Association.

Mrs Nicky Harrison chairman of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities' education committee has written to the minister protesting at the speech which, said the Government's Special Education Bill would encourage a steady and sustained move towards planned integration.

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Mr William Whitelaw, the Home Secretary, has announced that the Home Office is considering legislation to ban the distribution of "extremist" leaflets around schools as part of its inquiry into racial attacks

## Labour victory would bring ban on corporal punishment

by Richard Garner

Labour MPs will face a three-line whip to steer through a ban on corporal punishment in the first session of Parliament if they are elected to power after the next general election, Mr Neil Kinnock, the party's education spokesman, said this week.

Mr Kinnock was speaking as the Society of Teachers Opposed to Physical Punishment released details of a survey they had conducted among MPs asking for their opinions on corporal punishment.

Labour's national executive committee has already urged Labour-controlled councils to press for its abolition and suggested legislation to ban its use should be included in the first session of a new Labour administration.

## Report wants training boards to stay

by Mark Jackson

The Government is advised to put off its plans to shut down most of the statutory training boards in a report sent to it by the Manpower Services Commission this week. The recommendation has the support of both sides of industry.

The report, which is based on a review of the existing structure ordered by the Employment Secretary, says that it would be silly to tamper with it while the Government is still trying to work out what will be needed to implement its New Training Initiative, the strategy for modernising and extending the whole of the training system. The deadline for responses to the Government's NIT proposals is September.

The report does list a number of boards which it says should be kept, whatever is eventually decided about the others. They include the big three - engineering, construction, and road transport.

The report, which was approved by a full meeting of the commission, including representatives of the CBI, the TUC, and the education service, will be published at the end of the month.

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Mr Kinnock said that the party at its conference last year had voted unanimously in favour of abolition and added: "There would not be a free vote on it. It would be a party policy and there will be a three-line whip on the vote." He said that MPs who voted against "were actually endorsing the view that children in schools should be flogged."

Teachers who continued to use corporal punishment after that were likely to face an assault charge - although Mr Kinnock felt that it should be left up to individual local education authorities to decide whether they would retain their jobs.

Only one of out six MPs responded to the survey but the results showed a majority of them were in

favour of abolition. A total of 106 replied with 73 in favour of abolition, 24 against and nine non-committal. Of the 73 in favour, 68 were Labour MPs, two Liberals, one Social Democrat, one Plaid Cymru and one Ulster Unionist. Those against were made up of 20 Tory MPs, two Labour, one Liberal and one Social Democrat. The non-committal MPs included seven Tories, one Labour and one Ulster Unionist MP.

Last week an amendment proposed to the Education Bill in the House of Lords outlawing the use of corporal punishment on handicapped children was rejected by 58 votes to 28. It was suggested by Liberal peer Lord Beaumont.

The survey entitled "A Quarter of a Million Beatings: An analysis of official statistics exposing the myth that corporal punishment is rarely used" was based on official corporal punishment figures supplied by 10 local education authorities.

STOPP said that the 10 authorities contained about 10 per cent of all England's schoolchildren. It took the average number of beatings in a year by the 10 L.E.A.s and then applied this figure to the roll of children in English schools to come up with a figure of 227,163 beatings a year or one every 20 seconds.

Mr Nigel de Gruchy, assistant secretary of the National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers, called STOPP's methods

## Emergency report on youth service role in inner cities

An emergency report is being prepared by the Thompson committee, which is reviewing overall youth provision for the Government. It will say how the youth services can be used to combat alienation among inner city youngsters.

The committee, whose full report is not due for another year, had already obtained the Education Secretary's approval for an interim report before this month's surge of disturbances. It would have dealt with a number of current issues, such as the proposals for national community service, to which most of the committee are strongly opposed. Now the interim report will concentrate on explaining to the Government the exact nature of youth deprivation and the way it produces

protest and crime; and the role that Government and local authority policies play in the process.

The committee does not expect to say anything new, although by the end of next month they will have the results of the first stage of a study involving young people in some of the riot cities as well as other towns and county areas.

But they believe that Ministers need to have spell out for them and put into the form of official recommendations the warnings and advice which have been given in a stream of studies and reports over the years. Many of the committee's members are shocked by what they see as the extreme naivety of Ministerial pronouncements since the rioting began.

Men teachers in all types of school are on average slightly older than women. And secondary schools tend to have a younger staff than other types of school and FE colleges. Half of secondary teachers were under 35 in 1979, while teachers in primary schools were more evenly spread over the age bands. FE lecturers were concentrated in the middle age bands, with more than a third between 40 and 50.

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Last week an amendment proposed to the Education Bill in the House of Lords outlawing the use of corporal punishment on handicapped children was rejected by 58 votes to 28. It was suggested by Liberal peer Lord Beaumont.

The survey entitled "A Quarter of a Million Beatings: An analysis of official statistics exposing the myth that corporal punishment is rarely used" was based on official corporal punishment figures supplied by 10 local education authorities.

STOPP said that the 10 authorities contained about 10 per cent of all England's schoolchildren. It took the average number of beatings in a year by the 10 L.E.A.s and then applied this figure to the roll of children in English schools to come up with a figure of 227,163 beatings a year or one every 20 seconds.

Mr Nigel de Gruchy, assistant secretary of the National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers, called STOPP's methods

He agreed that the quarter of a million figure could be wrong but added: "I would think it is a Conservative estimate. Six of the 10 authorities were from the South of England where they don't use corporal punishment as much as the north."

In two of the authorities, the Inner London Education Authority and Waltham Forest, corporal punishment has been abolished by the Labour controlling groups.

## Emergency report on youth service role in inner cities

An emergency report is being prepared by the Thompson committee, which is reviewing overall youth provision for the Government. It will say how the youth services can be used to combat alienation among inner city youngsters.

The committee, whose full report is not due for another year, had already obtained the Education Secretary's approval for an interim report before this month's surge of disturbances. It would have dealt with a number of current issues, such as the proposals for national community service, to which most of the committee are strongly opposed. Now the interim report will concentrate on explaining to the Government the exact nature of youth deprivation and the way it produces

protest and crime; and the role that Government and local authority policies play in the process.

The committee does not expect to say anything new, although by the end of next month they will have the results of the first stage of a study involving young people in some of the riot cities as well as other towns and county areas.

But they believe that Ministers need to have spell out for them and put into the form of official recommendations the warnings and advice which have been given in a stream of studies and reports over the years. Many of the committee's members are shocked by what they see as the extreme naivety of Ministerial pronouncements since the rioting began.

Men teachers in all types of school are on average slightly older than women. And secondary schools tend to have a younger staff than other types of school and FE colleges. Half of secondary teachers were under 35 in 1979, while teachers in primary schools were more evenly spread over the age bands. FE lecturers were concentrated in the middle age bands, with more than a third between 40 and 50.

## In brief

### No bail for teacher

A Birmingham teacher, Bridget Parsons, of Highgate, a suburb in the city, has been remanded in custody for a second week accused of throwing a missile at a police vehicle during disturbances in the city's Handsworth suburb two weeks ago. Her plea for bail was rejected.

### Redundancy threat lifted after talks

The threat of compulsory redundancy has been lifted from teachers in Staffordshire, following talks this week between county councillors and teachers' union leaders.

Mr Bob Cant, Labour MP and chairman of the education committee, had earlier warned that 45 teachers would be made redundant from the beginning of next term. However, now all full-time teachers have been offered alternative posts. Part-time teachers who have still not been offered jobs will be offered work as supply teachers next term.

### Merger go-ahead

Holland Park School, one of London's first comprehensives created in the 1950s is to have a closure notice served on it in a merger plan with two other North Kensington schools.

The Inner London Education Authority's development sub-committee made the decision last week in spite of a campaign by Holland Park to remain open and retain its own staff. The new school will be on the Holland Park site.

### Slaughter protest

Mr Jack Chambers, the President of the National Union of Teachers, has condemned the slaughter of 400 Canadian bears in order to provide beaks for the guard of honour at the Royal Wedding next week.

Mr Chambers, who has recently been in Canada with a party of children on an exchange visit, said: "I have been asked how the Duke of Edinburgh can reconcile this slaughter with his being President of the World Wildlife Fund."

### Top management

Five students and their teacher from South Essex Sixth Form College have won the UK National Management Championship.

It is the first time that an educational establishment rather than a company has won the award and Mr John Hearn and his pupils defeated three teams of industrial executives. The team now represents the UK in a game against the winners of the Australian Business Management Game.

### Ballot battle

About £2,000 is being spent by Purley High School for Boys parents' association on a ballot to show Croydon's director of education his school's reshuffle plan is not wanted.

Director Mr Donald Naismith has recommended closing seven schools and a system of 11 to 16 schools with a separate tertiary college.

### Job loss anger

The Liverpool association of the National Union of Teachers has protested over a city council decision not to renew the contracts of 33 teachers - mostly teaching in inner city schools - next term.



## Diane Spencer on a study of young coloured people's views of school and society

# No faith, some hope, little charity

Dissatisfaction with teachers and careers officers is one of the key points to emerge from a series of interviews with coloured school leavers contained in a book published yesterday.

Markedly different aspirations and achievements among the West Indian and Asian youngsters are also clear in the study of youngsters in the Handsworth area of Birmingham. It was written by Mr Peter Ratcliffe, consultant statistician with the Aston University/SSRC Research Unit on Ethnic Relations and a lecturer in sociology at Warwick University.

The research also shows markedly different attitudes towards the police.

The research team interviewed in depth a random sample of 25 West Indians and 25 Asians between 16 and 21, three-quarters of whom had left school at 16. They were all members of families forming part of a quota sample of 900 Handsworth householders (300 indigenous whites, 300 West Indians and 300 Asians) selected for a major study carried out during 1974-8.

The experiences of the two groups while at school were markedly different, as were the qualifications with which they emerged.

None of the West Indians had progressed beyond CSEs, and there appeared to be a distinct mood of dissatisfaction with the interest which the teachers had shown in them. Only a third felt that their teachers had given them consistent encouragement throughout secondary school. Many said their teachers had effectively prevented them from studying O level examinations which they thought they could have passed.

Some children described teachers in terms which suggested both open physical conflict and saw staff as symbols of oppression. "Some teachers were army-major types gave us the cane. I put a chair over the French teacher's head," said one

West Indian boy.

Half of the West Indian children interviewed left school with no paper qualifications at all, and less than one in four felt that the career officers who interviewed them had been any help.

Asians were equally sceptical about the advice of officers.

A West Indian boy said: "They took up self-judgment. They saw me doing a particular job - a labouring job," and an Asian boy said: "When Officer, I told him I wanted to go on to study and he kept trying to persuade me to get a job."

Asian youths seemed to do rather better than the West Indians on leaving qualifications although approximately the same proportion (a half) had left with no formal qualifications. Asian boys in particular seemed to be keen to gain O and A level passes. Three boys had passed A levels, and at the other end of the scale only five had left without taking any examinations.

This keenness to gain qualifications is reflected in their job aspirations: almost a half of the Asian boys was aiming for scientific or other professional occupations.

Outside work, many had radically different views from their parents on race relations: 76 per cent of the West Indian and 44 per cent of the Asian children admitted that there were at least "some problems" leading to disharmony. When the parents of the same children were interviewed some six months or so previously the corresponding figures had been 40 per cent and 20 per cent respectively.

Most of the young people conveyed the impression of a group living under siege conditions, under attack from politicians (such as Enoch Powell), the police and white society in general.

Activities such as "Paki-bashing" have led to other feelings of insecurity

among Asians - feelings expressed clearly by one boy who argued that "whites mock Asians". The report says that the apparent timidity of Asians has sometimes, in a violent environment, led to inter-racial conflict within immigrant groups. "Thus, West Indians have, on occasions, sought and won the respect of white youth by their display of brute force in exposing the alleged physical weakness of Asians. It was this type of activity which led one girl in particular to argue that 'West Indians are unprovoked'."

The radical difference between the ethnic groups in terms of open conflict with the police was also reflected in the study. Whereas 64 per cent of the Asian youths said that the police treated black people fairly, only 24 per cent of the West Indians gave a similar response.

West Indians were, on the whole, much less enthusiastic about the suggestion that more black police should be recruited. Those who were opposed tended to take the view that such people would be "traitors" to their own kind.

"If they join, they will act like their white comrades. I've seen black police kicking black girls. They get brainwashed," said one West Indian girl.

Just over half of the West Indians did think that the suggestion was a good one, largely on the grounds that police harassment would decrease. For example, one comment was "A coloured cop would be there to make sure the white cop doesn't treat black people rough - we'd respect the police a bit more." And another said: "There wouldn't be so much unfair treatment and prejudice against black people."

The belief in the high frequency, even commonplace nature, of police violence against blacks was widespread among these and other West Indians interviewed.

Asian youths tended to see police/black relations as essentially police/

West Indian relations. One of the overwhelming majority who approved of immigrant policemen and policewomen said, "West Indians would take more notice of black police". The remainder thought the Asian police would be a good idea because they would be useful in a practical way, for example by being able to communicate with Asian families who did not speak English.

Both ethnic groups were extremely unhappy about the present state of race relations in Britain. In fact, only 30 per cent felt that matters were actually improving. Economic pressure, cultural differences and white racism were seen as contributing to a radical worsening of relations. Furthermore, almost half of the sample felt that black people ought to organize to protect themselves if attacked, and many clearly felt this to be a distinct possibility. One Asian boy pointed out that a vigilante group of his fellow countrymen had, indeed, already been formed.

One major point which emerges was the value which parents, irrespective of ethnic group, placed on education continuing after secondary school. Approximately two-thirds of West Indian parents, and as many as 85 per cent of Asians, hoped that their eldest son would continue his education after school.

West Indian parents tended to set their sights rather lower. Their main emphasis was placed on the importance of their sons acquiring good, steady well-paid jobs. With both groups there appeared to be little major disagreement between parents and their children on this issue.

Continuing education was also seen to be important for their eldest daughters, but much more so in the case of West Indians. The Asian girls were not expected, by custom, to work.

*Racism and Reaction, A Profile of Handsworth, Peter Ratcliffe, Routledge and Kegan Paul. £12.50.*

## Wedding day off PAT - on video

by Richard Garner

While the rest of the country was the day off by courtesy of the Family, nearly 200 delegates in the Professional Association of Teachers will be celebrating the wedding of Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer by speeding to Northampton University for their annual conference.

However, just in case they are the wedding of the century, some organizers have arranged to play back a video recording of the event to delegates after they have completed their formal business on Wednesday.

The conference is the first to be held by the union, whose members pledge never to strike, since Mr Mark Carlisle, the Education Secretary, granted it recognition at Burnham committee, which represents teachers' pay.

One of the topics which will be given priority during the three days is a motion reaffirming that PAT, non-aligned politically and not sent all shades of opinion rather than to be closely identified with any one political image.

Delegates are anxious to counter the image of the union portrayed by other teachers' organizations which have claimed it is the "body of the Government and little more than a management representation on the teachers' side during pay negotiations."

Other items given prime importance include a demand for an overhaul of the allocation of grades for senior teachers in schools - which is likely to be the subject of negotiation in a working party already set up to review the pay structure of teachers. Both management and teachers' organizations have complained about the lack of promotion prospects in schools because of the present system.

There is also a call for the Government to introduce legislation to enforce retirement of both men and women teachers at 60 - and other pensions to be paid to men at that age. A similar motion calls for the to be brought in over the next few years.

PAT is anxious to keep its nose on the education map now that the debate over whether it should be granted official recognition is over.

In the past, it has felt that by staging its conference at the end of July when little else is happening in the education world - it may become the focus of attention. Unfortunately for PAT, the great British public may be focussing its attention elsewhere next Wednesday.

## Arts Council aims to broaden appeal

The Arts Council plans to pay more attention to education which makes grants.

In future, it will try to persuade everyone who receives an Arts Council grant that efforts to increase public understanding and involvement should be an integral part of their work.

The policy, announced in a consultative document this week, will mean extending the criteria for grants to include efforts to broaden the social mix of audiences, and to develop the public's response to the arts.

The paper says that artists can also benefit from closer contacts with the public. One sculptor, who worked in an artist-in-residence in a primary school, changed direction from large-scale formalist sculptures to smaller-scale representational work.

But the Arts Council stresses that any education work must be in cooperation with education authorities and jointly financed.

*The Arts Council and Education. Available from the Information Dept. Arts Council of Great Britain, 10, Piccadilly, London W1N 0AU.*

## Council of Local Education Authorities' Conference. Sarah Bayliss reports

# Carlisle's college solution derided

A suggestion from Mr Mark Carlisle, the Education Secretary, that social unrest might be avoided if more young people were encouraged to stay on at school and in colleges, was met with derision from some members at the annual conference of the Council of Local Education Authorities at Southampton University.

In some sharp exchanges with Mr Carlisle, Labour council leaders said that unless more government money was available, teenagers would be turned away from colleges this year as they had been last.

"How are we to admit more young people to colleges when they are already full and bursting at the seams and when there is no FE building programme?" said Sir Ashley Bramall, former leader of the Inner London Education Authority, whose question was echoed by leaders from Sheffield and Lancashire.

Mr Carlisle was addressing the closing session of the three-day CLEA conference. As a result of county elections last May, the audience had a Labour majority.

The Education Secretary said the recent street rioting showed that Bri-

tain faced problems as serious as any since the last war - "perhaps more serious because the threat is from within."

People involved in education had a responsibility to look to the causes, particularly as much of the violence was committed by young people.

He pointed to alienation and "failure of identification" as the main cause. This was affected to different degrees by racism, city centre decay and unemployment but he stressed that the latter was no more than a contributory cause of unrest. "Those who claim wrongly that the government wants high unemployment and that this alleged aim justifies violence and disturbance have much to answer for."

He went on: "We are concerned with young people who believe that their fellow citizens set no value on them and who believe that they will not be able, or be given the chance, to make their mark and their contribution to society."

Parents should be much more involved in the education system. With that as a big proviso "we could help combat the alienation... if we could persuade more of our young

people that full-time education has so much to offer them they should continue in it after the compulsory period rather than swell the ranks of the unemployed."

There was spare capacity in the system, he said. "I am convinced that there are many young people who could take advantage of full-time education if they were offered a relevant and attractive course."

Schools also had a big part to play in moral education - in teaching respect, discipline, moral values, knowing right from wrong. Children should leave school believing in the importance of honesty, integrity and self-discipline.

He said that in some areas where violence had not been copied, schools deserved some credit for inculcating children with values of importance. He asked whether elsewhere, it was got over to children that "police men and the forces of law and order are not alien forces but they are the very bulwarks of a free society?" Respect for the monarchy and its effect on the stability of society should also be encouraged.

Later at a press conference, Mr



Sir Ashley Bramall: ridiculed suggestion

Carlisle confirmed that there was no possibility of the Government introducing educational maintenance allowances for children staying on. But there was no evidence that their absence was a disincentive. The Inspectorate had estimated there were 50,000 spare places in post-16 education.

## Local anger boils over as 'resign' motion is debated

A majority of the local authority leaders demanded that Mr Carlisle should defend his service against government cuts or resign.

"CLEA has the last chance to tell Mr Carlisle the gloves are off. He must speak out or get out," said Mr Richard Farnell, a councillor from Rochdale who described the prospect of closing nursery schools and abolishing the school meals service because of reductions demanded by the Department of the Environment.

Mr Philip Tomlinson, a councillor from Tameside proposed the motion that Mr Carlisle should resign and said Mr Keith Speed has set an example to ministers by resigning from the Navy over cuts in the armed forces. It was carried by 33 votes to 23.

During debate on several motions condemning central government cuts, Mr John Pearson, chairman of Wakefield's education committee and Labour vice-chairman of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities education committee, warned that local councils had masked the effect of reductions by stalling on the "horrendous" task of making teachers redundant.

"It's a fact that the Treasury and the DES mandarins are still saying show us one redundancy."

Mr Pearson said that damage done to the curriculum and to every

other part of the education service had been hidden in an "insidious" way and must now be publicized by authorities.

The Government was defended by Mr Geoffrey Brewer from the London Borough of Redbridge. The world was in recession and education could only have its share of public funds and no more.

Mr Bill Martin, a member of Humberstone education committee, said he had been stunned by the way many local authorities had accepted reductions "almost without murmur". The previous Tory administration in his area had "manhandled" education, and a 12 pence supplementary rate was now being raised by Labour to reinstate services.

He warned that the Conservative Government was "sowing the seeds of revolution" in Britain. In Soweto, young people had been the first to take to the street against an unfair and authoritarian society - the same was happening here.

After the debate he said he did not intend to be alarmed but children running amok were "just the tip of the iceberg". In his home town of Scunthorpe 1000 young people were unemployed and by September there would be 20 per cent of adults signing on the dole.

## United stand on colleges

The only unanimous vote of the conference, uniting the Conservative minority with the Labour majority, came over the future of advanced further education.

A resolution, proposed by Mr John Pearson, education vice chairman of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities, said: "This conference recognizes the need for changes in the management and funding of advanced further education but reaffirms its commitment to local authority role and welcomes the positive initiatives taken by CLEA in presenting their recent proposals to the Secretary of State."

Mr Pearson, chairman of Wakefield's education committee, said: "We are not plugging to the relics of a more moribund empire and resisting changes out of pride. CLEA was rightly asserting the need for local

authorities to play a full and active role in the future administration of colleges."

Mr Philip Merridale, Conservative chairman of Hampshire's education committee and vice chairman of the Association of County Councils' education committee said he could not believe that a Government committed to law and order would take over a sector of education in a "smash and grab" raid.

Mrs Angela Rumbold from Kingston-on-Thames, and Conservative leader on the AMA education committee, said local authorities had failed to publicize what they had achieved in reducing polytechnic expenditure.

Mrs Rumbold did not believe that a body created by the Secretary of State could manage the day-to-day intricacies of local colleges.

## Positive view on DES plans

Dr William Taylor, director of London University's Institute of Education, looked down an attack on CLEA's proposals for a national body for public sector higher education when he addressed the conference.

He omitted the words from his script which had said, "I do not

much like the CLEA proposals" and concentrated on what he thought was good about the Department of Education's proposals. He believed these did offer authorities the opportunity to plan and develop the work of polytechnics and other colleges.

Earlier Dr Taylor said the education service was under-researched.

## ... And why the plan would fail

A further education college in the heart of Sheffield has been forced to turn away several hundred prospective students even though four extra staff and six extra mobile classrooms will be available to cope with increased numbers next term.

And in London at least one further education college has applied for funding to hire a church hall next term to cope with the demand for student places.

Both cities are attempting to meet the increased demand for education but councillors are already in deep trouble with the Government for alleged overspending. They could be heavily penalized by loss of grant in the autumn.

By contrast, Essex county council which has made efforts to meet spending targets by hopping £2.5m off education mid-year, is facing a crisis in its sixth form. Teacher representatives at a recent education committee meeting asked how the schools were going to accommodate the 16-year-olds who were "flocking back in hordes".

According to Mr Arthur Collinge, principal of Granville College, Sheffield, student numbers have been rising steadily over the past few years in line with the unemployment crisis. But the demand is so acute this year that the college receptionist has been asked to monitor the number of inquiries over the summer, rather than just turning them away as in previous years.

Last year, 200 students who were qualified to take hotel and catering courses and a hairdressing course were rejected because of lack of space at Granville and the situation looks similar this year.

Mr Collinge said that some spare places might persist in engineering and building because the recession had hit the number of apprenticeships available.

In response to unemployment and increased demand for education the college has begun "pre-employment" courses which involve less than 21 hours a week class contact-time so that students can continue to claim supplementary benefit.

City and Guilds foundation courses are also being expanded in community health, engineering, art and design.

In Sheffield's education committee, which estimates school staying-on rates will rise from 3,500 to 4,000 16-year olds by the autumn, members have agreed to cut 25 fewer teaching jobs than was planned to cope with the rush in spite of the Department of the Environment's request for a £15m cut in this year's council budget.

Rowlinson school in Sheffield, which has pioneered 21-hour courses for sixth formers, will lose four staff instead of nearly seven because there will be at least 45 more students than expected in the first-year sixth next autumn.

Paddington College in West London hopes to benefit from the Inner London Education Authority's latest decision to raise a supplementary rate and put £3m into provision for the young unemployed. Further education colleges can expect to benefit by about £25m in extra resources next term, according to papers going to a special ILEA meeting next Monday.

Mr Alan Hutchingson, principal of Paddington, estimated that three or four extra Business Education Council courses with about 18 pupils on each, could have been filled in September if a recommendation had been available. Next term he hopes to hire a church hall for some GCE classes.

Members of Essex education committee, which is planning to cut over £300,000 from its 11 further education colleges next term, have expressed concern about provision for the rise in sixth form numbers.

Mr Gerald Gibson, head of sixth form studies at Collyer's High School in Clacton, said 140 pupils were returning instead of an expected 110.

Mrs Margaret Hutton, chairman of the schools sub-committee, has advised schools to contact area offices in cases of special difficulty.

## Immigration nursery rhyme test

An 11-year-old Indian girl born in Britain had to recite nursery rhymes learned at her primary school before she could convince immigration officials she should be allowed back into the country to rejoin her parents.

The case has come to light after a complaint to Mr Cecil Clothier, the Parliamentary Ombudsman, by the girl's father over the way she was treated by the Home Office.

According to the Ombudsman's report, the girl, who was born in Britain, started at an English school before returning to India at the age of six to stay with her paternal grandparents.

It was on her return to Heathrow Airport five years later that she was detained by immigration officials and taken to the Home Office Appeals Unit at Harmondsworth for the night. Later she was transferred to a hospital with suspected malaria and it was six weeks before she could be reunited with her parents.

Immigration officials had been suspicious that the girl was entering the country illegally because she carried an out-of-date English passport which did not mention her place of birth - even though she had an up-to-date Indian passport, which said she had been born in an English city.

She was eventually allowed to remain in the country after an appeal hearing for which 25 witnesses, including the former headmistress of the centre for pre-school teaching of English she had attended and her class teacher at her first school, were called to testify on her behalf.

The Ombudsman's report, "This was followed by rendering of English nursery rhymes by the daughter. When the Home Office presiding officer was satisfied that she had been in England and had been taught by the two teachers..."



An audience with royalty: the Queen and Prince Philip were entertained by these young dancers at the Festival of Sri Lanka held at the Commonwealth Institute in London.

## 'Utopia' would push independents underground, says Boyson

Private education could be forced to "underground" if Labour succeeds in destroying independent education, Mr Rhodes Boyson, junior minister, claimed, this week. He accused Labour of following the totalitarian precedents of Hitler similar to those of Adolf Hitler.

Mr Boyson told Conservatives in his Brent north constituency: "If parents are not to be allowed to pay for their children's education in independent schools, will private tutors, the private possession of books and quality magazines, visits to our theatres and art galleries also be prohibited as divisive since all parents will not provide them for their chil-

dren?"

"It is all too easy to force a situation arising in Labour's 'socialist Utopia' where private tutors move from house to house secretly under cover of darkness, and are concealed in 'teacher holes' like priest holes of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries religious persecutions?"

*The Arts Council and Education. Available from the Information Dept. Arts Council of Great Britain, 10, Piccadilly, London W1N 0AU.*



## School to work

### Rush to provide places invites widespread abuses

## YOP's 'cheap labour' crisis

The Youth Opportunities Programme faces a new crisis of confidence as its managers wait for Cabinet sanction for another big rush expansion to cope with the new surge in school leaver unemployment.

The problem is substitution – the use of YOP youngsters by employers to replace paid employees – which has bedevilled work experience schemes since the Labour Government's original temporary special measures in the mid seventies. Manpower Services Commission staff have been trying for years to find ways of eliminating this self-defeating use of government money; but every time the programme has to be expanded quickly they find themselves caught up in the numbers game – so desperate to find extra places that they have no time to weed out unscrupulous employers. These have included some public authorities as well as private firms.

The crash expansion of the programme last autumn, which meant that the commission's area teams had virtually to give up monitoring activities for months, led to widespread protests from youth bodies and unions, who in some areas banned work experience schemes because of

their abuse. Since then, the commission's chairman, Sir Richard O'Brien, and his senior staff have repeatedly referred to their determination to combat substitution, and stressed that only a minority of employers are involved.

But allegations of widespread abuse of the programme were made in three separate television programmes this week.

On Monday night a group of YOP youngsters in a BBC programme confronted Lord Gower, the minister responsible for youth employment, with detailed allegations of how they had been exploited by employers. The same evening, BBC's Newsnight team invites employers in South Wales admitting that they had replaced with YOP youngsters, and clearly believing that the programme was intended to help them cut their wage bills. It was in South Wales that a college lecturer got into hot water with the local authority last autumn when he alleged publicly that there was widespread abuse by employers and drew angry denials from the MSC's local special programmes boards. On Tuesday Mr James Prior, the Employment

Secretary, appeared on Newsnight to discuss the allegations.

The commission say major part of the problem is that most of the work experience places are provided by small or medium-sized firms, whose behaviour is difficult to monitor, particularly since many of them are not unionized. At the beginning of this year, the Confederation of British Industry set up a special unit to try to get more of the big companies to participate in the programme. As the TES reported last week, the commission was told at its last meeting that the results had been disappointing – only 8,000 more places.

In fact, the unit has already found well over twice that number of places, and has identified another 5,000 which are now in the pipeline. Its director, Mr James Cooke, says that it only really began operations in March, and is only just appointing the last of its regional staff – executives seconded by big firms.

Mr Cooke says that although the unit hopes to find considerably more work experience places, it is unrealistic to ignore the growing difficulties of big companies; and that it may be more useful

## Mother tongue teaching and the official language of evasion

by Diane Spencer

Mother tongue teaching should receive a fresh impetus from tomorrow when the directive of the EEC on the education of migrant children comes into force.

But the occasion will go largely unmarked by the Department of Education and Science. "A memorandum will be sent to the Commission giving a progress report showing how we are complying with the directive", a spokesman said this week.

The directive states: "Member states, shall, in accordance with their national circumstances and legal systems, and in cooperation with states of origin, take appropriate measures to promote, in co-ordination with normal education, teaching of the mother tongue and culture of the country of origin for the children (of member states)".

Although the directive drafted in 1976, was originally intended to help movement of parents and children within the European community, the British Government acknowledged that it applied equally to children from New Commonwealth countries.

At a European Commission colloquium in Bedford last year, Mr Mark Carlielle, the education secretary, said: "We intend to apply this directive without regard to the country of origin of the children concerned. That means we will be providing for about 650,000 pupils, only a small proportion of whom will be from community countries."

However, the DES idea of "promotion" has so far been confined to funding research projects. These include sponsoring with the EEC, a linguistic minorities project costing £300,000 over four years, based in London University Institute of Education, which aims to provide an account and analysis of the changing patterns of bilingualism, and a bilingual education programme for Punjabi speaking rising – lives in Bradford, funded exclusively by the DES.

The Schools Council has just launched a three-year project with £200,000 from EEC funds. The aims include helping monolingual teachers with pupils who speak English as a second language, and producing teaching materials for Greek and Bengali speakers. After an evaluation, guidelines will be produced for use with other languages.

When the directive was drafted, the EEC funded a four-year pilot project in Bedford, for children of Italian – and Punjabi – speaking parents. Children had some lessons in these languages and were helped with keeping up the mother tongue. When the project ended last year, neither the local authority nor the DES offered to extend it. At the colloquium, Mr Peter Browning, the chief education officer of Bedfordshire, queried the desirability or practicality of mother tongue teaching.

He said: "So far, the project has cost £150,000 for four years to teach 150 children either Italian or Punjabi – less than 2 per cent of the 9,000 immigrant children in the county. There are 70 nationalities in Bedfordshire."

He pointed out that the directive envisaged providing mother tongue teaching "principally to facilitate the possible reintegration of the children into their country of origin" yet most of the immigrants coming to Britain came to stay.

This has been typical of the lukewarm response to the directive. However, the Commission for Racial Equality argues that reintegration is only one of the many purposes of mother tongue teaching and this was also perceived by the EEC. Language diversity and maintenance, the concept of a multi-cultural society and its importance in industry and commerce should also be taken into account.

In a statement called "Teaching of the languages of the ethnic minority communities in the UK" to be published next month, the Commission



But which language the first?

points out that the linguistic diversity of British society has so far been ignored, and when considered, is always viewed as a liability and not a national resource.

In 1978, a census of Inner London Education Authority pupils to whom English was not a first language identified 128 languages. Twelve of these constituted the language for more than 1,000 pupils. Such diversity is not confined to London or the big cities. In Kent, there are at least 17 languages and dialects spoken.

Many do not see mother tongue teaching as creating linguistic ghettoes. They feel it helps children to develop their language skills as well as the cultural identity alongside learning English.

In the absence of any government provision, classes in mother tongue have been run in increasing numbers over the past 20 years.

With the help of the EEC at Bradford College, the CRE has set up a series of eight one-day regional consultations with some of 40 volunteer-run part-time classes. The CRE had also completed a survey of all education authorities to find out the extent.

Although the full report of the survey will not be out until the autumn, the results show that the multi-lingual perspective of a multi-racial society is far from being recognised. The survey also revealed that education authorities tend to regard mother tongue teaching to voluntary classes and help only with teaching materials for Greek and Bengali speakers. After an evaluation, guidelines will be produced for use with other languages.

When the directive was drafted, the EEC funded a four-year pilot project in Bedford, for children of Italian – and Punjabi – speaking parents. Children had some lessons in these languages and were helped with keeping up the mother tongue. When the project ended last year, neither the local authority nor the DES offered to extend it. At the colloquium, Mr Peter Browning, the chief education officer of Bedfordshire, queried the desirability or practicality of mother tongue teaching.

He said: "So far, the project has cost £150,000 for four years to teach 150 children either Italian or Punjabi – less than 2 per cent of the 9,000 immigrant children in the county. There are 70 nationalities in Bedfordshire."

He pointed out that the directive envisaged providing mother tongue teaching "principally to facilitate the possible reintegration of the children into their country of origin" yet most of the immigrants coming to Britain came to stay.

This has been typical of the lukewarm response to the directive. However, the Commission for Racial Equality argues that reintegration is only one of the many purposes of mother tongue teaching and this was also perceived by the EEC. Language diversity and maintenance, the concept of a multi-cultural society and its importance in industry and commerce should also be taken into account.

In a statement called "Teaching of the languages of the ethnic minority communities in the UK" to be published next month, the Commission

United States/Deborah Kasout

## Logic, reasoning and creativity to the fore as maths supremos compete

WASHINGTON: Not even a fire alarm could disturb the concentration of Georgetown University students in their classrooms last week. For when the bell sounded, 185 high school students from around the world were engaged in the mental gymnastics required for competition in the 1981 International Mathematical Olympiad.

The annual competition, which helps discover and encourage mathematically talented secondary school students, was held this year for the first time in the United States and attracted delegations from 27 countries, ranging from the Soviet Union to Tunisia.

"This competition hopefully stimulates good mathematical teaching in the schools," said Mr John Hersee, deputy leader of the eight-member team from Great Britain, "and it is enormously stimulating for the students – their own personal mathematics are challenged."

The examination consists of six problems (see examples below) chosen by an independent jury from submissions presented to the coaches for translation into their native language. To prevent any tipping, accidental or otherwise, coaches are sequestered from their teams until after the examination is over.

The students take the exam over a two-day period, working each day for four hours on three problems; knowing that their solutions will be judged not only for their correctness but also for the method by which they are solved. "These students have very quick minds with an enormous repertoire

of keys to try," said Mr Hersee. "They need problem-solving skills and strategy skills and also the ability to try something unexpected."

All of those factors are taken into consideration by the team coaches and the mathematicians fluent in the students' language, who judge the solutions and choose the student winners receive no monetary award, the honour of participating in the world's most prestigious mathematical competition for high school students will undoubtedly help open educational and career opportunities.

The first International Mathematical Olympiad was held in Romania in 1959, with seven Eastern bloc nations participating, and it remained an annual East European competition until England, Italy, France and Sweden joined in 1967.

Since then the number of participating nations has grown steadily. The United States joined in 1974, and Canada was one of several first-time participants in this year's Olympiad.

Although the competition is officially among individuals, national team scores are unofficially noted, with national honour and the merits of educational systems coming into play. Between 1975 and 1978 the teams from the Soviet Union, Great Britain and the United States have consistently ranked among the top five in team standings.

Students prepare for the competition in a variety of ways, with many teams participating in mini-drill camps to sharpen their skills. This year's eight-member team from the United States spent several weeks training with their coaches at the United States Military Academy at West Point, NY, filling each day with four hours of classes, and three and a half hours of homework. In contrast, preparation for the English team was left to the individual student.

"We met each other for the first time one hour before we boarded the plane for the United States," said Ian Jackson, a team member.

Postering friendly relations among students and teachers from different countries is one of the International Mathematical Olympiad's goals, and to the Canadian coach Ed Barbeau, it is the most important one.

"This is a world community of top-notch scholars, and here they have a chance to meet each other. Olympiad results: first, United States; second, West Germany; third, Great Britain."

Examples of the problems in this year's competition:

1. P is a point inside a given triangle ABC. D, E, F are the feet of the perpendiculars from P to the lines BC, CA, AB, respectively. Find all P for which

$$\frac{BC}{PD} + \frac{CA}{PE} + \frac{AB}{PF} \text{ is least.}$$

2. Three congruent circles have a common point O and lie inside a given triangle. Each circle touches a pair of sides of the triangle. Prove that the incentre and the circumcentre of the triangle, and the point O are collinear.

3. The function  $f(x, y)$  satisfies (1)  $f(0, y) = y + 1$ ; (2)  $f(x + 1, 0) = f(x, 1)$ ; (3)  $f(x + 1, y + 1) = f(x, f(x + 1, y))$ , for all non-negative integers  $x, y$ . Determine  $f(4, 1981)$ .

"Healthwise," Dr Elizabeth Adamson said, "you don't really have to worry about weevils and maggots – in fact the little black spots in the local bread usually are weevils."

But it was important to boil milk and water, to take malaria pills, and to have a stock of syringes needles, "since it's not at all unknown for people to go into hospital and come out with hepatitis."

"How do you know if you've got tapeworm?" someone asked. "You pass little bits of it," Elizabeth Adamson said. "Little wriggly bits."

Last week about 70 young graduates spend three days being briefed on the conditions they can expect when they take up teaching posts in the Sudan.

Since 1975 Sudan has recruited a large number of young Britons each year to teach at secondary level. This year almost 200 teachers are expected to leave for Khartoum. When they arrive in the country they will be posted to towns and villages, often in remote places, and some times to conditions which a British official has described as "appalling".

The worst conditions are in the south of the country where distances are vast, communications are sketchy, food is scarce, and there is intermittent political unrest.

"It's the most primitive part of the African continent... you really have to know what you're doing to survive there," George Kelly, organizer of Africa courses at the Farnham Castle International briefing centre, told teacher recruits last week. "It was no empty warning. In 1979, Paul Armes, a 22-year-old Birmingham graduate, was sent to the southern village of Tori. Six weeks later he died of malaria."

His death, plus serious illnesses among recruits, and a high drop-out rate from the scheme, prompted the British Government to agree to fund a detailed briefing programme for the new teachers. This year it will spend about £10,000 on four briefing courses.

Bureaucracy and delays are run of the mill, they warn, and the newcomers must not expect to find housing provided. "Take time off school until you find somewhere to live, or one of these areas."

A summary of the regional conditions and a statement of teaching of languages of ethnic minorities will be available free.



Concentration at the Olympiad

"but we have had better maths training in school than many others."

In addition to the intellectual stimulation and personal challenge involved in competing in the Olympiad, many students also enjoy the opportunity they have to measure themselves against other mathematically gifted students from around the world.

"We would be laughed at by other people at our schools if we tried to discuss some of the things that we have talked about here with each other," said British student Mark Bennet.

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NZ/Lindsay Hayes

## Selected gains in budget

WELLINGTON: Education rates fourth place in expenditure priority for New Zealand's 1981 budget, receiving \$NZ1,487m (\$619.5m), \$NZ246m more than last year.

As before, it retains 14 per cent of total spending and follows industrial development and health in a priority list headed by transport and communications.

Primary schools, with \$NZ448m, claim the biggest proportion of the vote, followed by \$NZ314m for state secondaries, \$NZ231m for universities, \$NZ245m for the integration of private schools, and \$NZ14m for state assistance to private schools.

Aside from an increase in most sectors to cover inflation, currently running at just over 15 per cent, there are some gains for tertiary, special and rural education.

The Government will build two more community colleges, at Tauranua and Gisborne, North Island, increase the number of teachers for the mentally handicapped, increase the boarding bursary for rural children and increase the per capita grant for schools transport.

Tertiary students will receive another \$NZ4 a week, bringing the basic bursary to \$NZ27.

Other developments include: provision for regular reviews of the tertiary syllabus prescription for trade and technical qualifications.

the establishment of a permanent secretariate to coordinate the interests of the country's 2,277 volunteer school committees.

a new scheme of appointments and appeals for kindergarten teachers.

Republic of Ireland/John Walsh

## Curriculum too 'dominated by theoretical'

DUBLIN: Teaching and the curriculum have suffered as a result of a serious failure to think through the aims and objectives of Irish education. This is the main charge in the first full length study of curriculum development in the Republic's schools.

The author of the study, published by the Institute of Public Administration, is Dr D. G. Mulcahy, professor of education at University College, Cork.

Professor Mulcahy claims that Irish secondary schools do not prepare pupils directly for the wide range of practical demands of living: school programmes are largely dominated by a concern for the academic and the theoretical.

He agrees that there have been some welcome reforms, but laments the lack of an official guiding philosophy of education in a highly centralized system of schooling hinders the movement for change. As a result there is delay in the implementation of reforms, and misunderstanding by parents and the public.

The central theme of the study is that while the schools have always seen it as their task to prepare pupils for life they have never fully examined what this entails either in terms of pupils' learning or in terms of what ought to constitute the school curriculum.

The study argues, furthermore, that rather than drawing up the school curriculum on the basis of some theory of the nature and structure of knowledge it ought, instead, to be grounded in some understanding of what constitutes, or is likely to constitute, a preparation for life based on an identification of the major demands and activities of living.

While Professor Mulcahy is in favour of the idea of a common core curriculum at secondary level, the common element, he argues, should derive from the view that each pupil's curriculum ought to include studies aimed at preparing him in each of these areas.

Further, higher and adult education institutions should consider ways of teaching these languages: teacher unions, the TUC and CRE should help to promote the notion of linguistic diversity as a national asset; the government should make specific grants to local authorities to provide for teaching minority languages and using them as a medium for teaching other subjects as proposed for Welsh in the 1978 Education Act.

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Hilary Wilce joins a briefing course for young Britons about to teach in remote parts of the Sudan

## Harsh reality behind the romance

Marc Weedon-Newstead, who taught in Lul, a village five hours west of Juba, gave a first-hand account of exactly why the south of Sudan is not for the inexperienced.

He and a girlfriend spent a year teaching in the north, before returning for "the adventure" of teaching in the south.

In their new girls boarding school there were often no pens or pencils, desks or chairs, and 60 per cent of the girls spoke virtually no English. Marc taught history. "But it was impossible to do anything in detail. Luckily I took my own books, because there weren't any. I had to go through my notes word by word, very slowly, so that the English pattern (stream) got bored, and the Arabic pattern sat there looking completely dazed."

When they arrived at their village there was nowhere for them to live. They survived mainly on lentils, and when the sole village pump broke down they were without water for days. "It was tough. It was very much a question of every man for himself. When there was meat available the other teachers would talk in their tribal language then sneak off with a plastic bag. You couldn't blame them."

The official Sudan policy is now not to send new recruits to the south, but the south desperately needs teachers and, despite all advice, there are still those who for whom the romance of the region is strong enough to overcome caution.

Jacqueline Smith told them. "It's the only way." Arthur Murray, recently returned from Dongola in the north east ("if you graded postings on a one-to-four basis, this would be about grade three"), showed slides of his house with its mud compound, standpipes and bucket latrines.

He warned that relationships among the small groups of expatriate teachers could become tense, and that couples should always masquerade as man and wife. The men had an obligation to stick up for their female colleagues, he said, since in the Sudan only a man's word carried any weight.

These old Sudan hands, tanned and battle-scarred, pass on their hard-earned experience to rapid newcomers. "I was admitted to two hospitals and the second was so bad I walked out, even though I had hepatitis and collapsed in the street," Robert Habbell said.

They suggest taking sunscreen and mosquito nets from Britain, buying a donkey to get around, being discreet about drinking and smoking drugs, and bearing in mind that old-fashioned teaching methods are what pupils and parents want.

Bureaucracy and delays are run of the mill, they warn, and the newcomers must not expect to find housing provided. "Take time off school until you find somewhere to live, or one of these areas."

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## Part-time job plan could cost less than benefits

by Sarah Bayliss

Ministers in the Department of Employment are considering a deal with a local authority which would take unemployed youngsters off social security and put them into part-time jobs.

Sheffield city council has offered to create part-time work for 1000 unemployed youngsters, including 500 youngsters, if the Government is prepared to subsidize their wages instead of paying them benefit.

Initial estimates show that the scheme could nearly halve what it at present costs the state to keep 1000 workers unemployed.

The deal was first devised in Sheffield last autumn and has been under intermittent discussion with ministers since. But interest has intensified since a meeting with Lord Gower, an employment minister, at the beginning of this month. A senior civil servant visited the city a fortnight ago to discuss the details and he is preparing a brief for ministers to consider.

Mr Michael Bower, joint deputy chairman of Sheffield's education committee said this week that the main aims were:

- to cut the cost to the state of unemployment
- to create meaningful work for people
- to do useful work for the community at large.

It was not intended for young people exclusively but, given the relatively low wages, it might suit young people with few responsibilities better than older people, he said.

An illustration of the scheme suggests that individuals should work a 30-hour week on jobs not otherwise done by the council: manual labouring jobs, unqualified clerical work, and unqualified caring jobs in council homes are among those earmarked. Work in the leisure and

recreation departments is also suggested.

The part-timers would not be concentrated on projects but would work among the 33,000 full-timers already employed by the council, which is the biggest employer in the city.

"It is essential that they are real workers doing real jobs for real pay. Then they would have all the dignity, sense of purpose and responsibility that we are told work brings," said Mr Bower.

Sheffield's leaders have suggested that, at the start, 500 young people would be taken on for £25 for 30 hours and another 500 adults at £50. The wages would total £1,875,000 annually. Earlier this year figures published by the Treasury showed that the minimum cost to the state of an unemployed worker was £70 a week in lost tax revenues and social security benefit. The cost to the Treasury of 1000 unemployed workers was therefore £3,500,000 annually.

Mr Bower said the scheme also met all the main criticisms held against the Manpower Services Commission scheme for young people.

First it did not involve "dead-weight" – the official term used to describe subsidization of jobs which would have existed anyway. The scheme was intended to create new jobs and could not be criticized for exploiting cheap labour since the jobs would not otherwise have existed.

It would also have more security than MSC schemes which end after a given period. The planners say it should only end through the effect of market forces – that is people would leave when there were better, more highly paid jobs to go to.

Finally it is hoped that the work done would be of benefit to everyone.

## Royal way to youth rebellion

An unhindered attack on the royal wedding preparations is made in the official journal of the youth service union, the Community and Youth Services Association. It links them with youth violence.

A leading article in the journal, *Report*, says: "Any excuse is seized upon to trot out the gold coaches and spend, spend, spend. The media cynicism built up and broadcast the spectacle... after all, the prospect of a royal wedding is much more important than the gloomy ransacked People's March for Jobs, or our young people's future."

"The former workshop of the world... now fixes its gaze firmly on the past and takes another dose of feudal-patriarchal-vaultism. In this drugged state we offer young people dead-end jobs, slums, unemployment, and an occasional glimpse (from the back of the crowd) of purple and gold. We are surprised – sometimes shocked – when they rebel!"

The leading article was prepared before the latest series of inner-city riots.

## TUC moves closer to young jobless

The TUC is now aiming to become the principal champion of the young jobless. It is trying to form an alliance with the voluntary agencies and the youth organisations to campaign on their behalf.

The TUC is hoping



# Letters

## Good historical writing of its time, not racism

Sir, - Mr Argles (Letters, July 10) says that the Rampton report quotes out of context a passage from H. A. L. Fisher's *A History of Europe*, and says it is a pity that "the race relations industry has chosen to single out a great liberal as an example of intolerance".

The point of the quotation in the report is to illustrate first, that it was natural for a great liberal and distinguished scholar writing 50 years ago in this country to assume important intellectual differences between the characters of "Europe" and "Asia" in which racial difference was vital.

Mr Argles has presumably looked back at Fisher's Introduction so as to quote the passage he does, but he has omitted what gives it its character and quoted a mere aside. "There is a European civilization. We know a European when we meet him. It is easy to distinguish him from a native of Pekin, or Benares, or of Teheran", says Fisher.

What is the mental jump from the nature of the civilisation Europe has developed to the physical appearance of individuals? Fisher says the world owes the incomparable gifts of modern science to European man, and then lists some of these gifts, adding that they are all "the result of researches carried out by white men of European stock". This of course brings in the Americans. He goes on to say that Christianity almost from the first

became a "European creed". Now the second point here is not to single out Fisher as a racist but to show that such assumptions are typical of much of our good historical writing as well as of fifth-rate textbooks and popular comics, and that they are all the more important for that. They have respectability. And, thirdly, what is their impact on children of all origins in schools? This is the important point, not the personal background or motivations of H. A. L. Fisher, G. M. Trevelyan, and many other famous liberal historians of the early twentieth century.

Surely this weaving together of great achievements and science and civilisation and Christianity with whiteness and "European stock" will give white children a thrill of superiority and children of other colours, at best, a feeling of inadequacy and discouragement, if used uncritically. Let schools use Fisher by all means, if they use Joseph Needham as well, and E. H. Carr, and Dancy, and other scholars with radically different outlooks on history that may stimulate not just anti-racism but good historical thinking.

It cannot be over-emphasized that there are sound educational reasons for making pupils aware of different perspectives on the history of civilisations, that are valid with or without wider consequences in mind.

Mr Argles uses for the Rampton

committee a familiar term of abuse which itself deserves some critical analysis: "The race relations industry". Like "do-gooder" or the American "bleeding heart", this term has the function of supposedly making argument unnecessary by labelling an opponent as one of a kind not worth listening to. It has no precise meaning, though it seems to imply that the people to whom it is applied are making a good thing out of battering on spurious racial problems. It is particularly inapplicable to an unpaid committee of enquiry set up by government.

ANN DUMMETT, Member of the Rampton Committee, 54 Park Town, Oxford.

Sir, - The interim report of the Rampton committee ordered some weeks ago has just reached me. Although there are a number of small points which I would take issue, I find myself in broad agreement with its findings.

I must add to a certain degree of surprise, however, at the section on language. The writers make a useful division into the three views on West Indian language (deficit, dialect interference and repertoire) which characterize the development of thought on the subject over the past 10 to 15 years. I was very surprised to find myself the only linguist named in this section, and even more surprised to find my name exclusively linked with dialect interference.

Although much of my early work (and that of various other writers too) discusses dialect interference, I have consistently pointed out in a wide range of publications that teacher attitudes towards dialect difference are more critical than the differences themselves (see, for example, *Language Attitudes*, *The TES*, June 11, 1976). Since far more of my writing has been concerned with the flexible range and repertoire of styles at the disposal of West Indian children, and the considerable educational potential of an approach which recognizes this range, I find it perplexing that I was not mentioned in the section on repertoire, which the Rampton committee rightly believes to be the most productive approach to non-standard dialects of English.

These minor quibbles fade into insignificance in the perspective of the truly tragic waste of talent in the West Indian community with which the committee was concerned. The misrepresentation of my position implicit in the report, however, is potentially damaging. Our job as linguists, educators and caring human beings is to work together and not to create unnecessary and misleading polarisation of opinion and controversy.

VIV EDWARDS, 18 Morgan Road, Reading, Berkshire.

lower grade jobs and that we had a higher proportion of students whose destinations were unknown.

Neither of these suggestions is true. The list of employers who recruit from my university reads like a stock market prospectus of blue chip firms and, another indication, starting salaries paid to Salford graduates are higher than the national average. Our proportion of "graduates whose employment is not known" is lower than the national average.

The employment record of some of the technological universities must badly hit by the cuts is so good compared with the rest that it is not surprising that your correspondent cannot quite believe it. It is never-the-less true. Salford has averaged a position of four in the employment league table over the past nine years. A much higher proportion than average go directly into employment. At the same time the proportion staying on for postgraduate research is the same as the national average. A higher proportion go into the wealth producing sectors of employment such as commerce and industry and in particular high technology industry.

This good record is not just the result of the University having more engineers. Each faculty has science, engineering, arts or social studies has a better employment record than the national average.

DESMOND SMITH, Director, Careers and Appointments Service, University of Salford.

## Teaching styles data

Sir, - I have been accused of many things over the past five years, but the allegation by Jane Hesketh ("When best is not good enough", July 17) that I threw away the most precious data is certainly the most ridiculous. Your readers are asked to believe that Murray Atkin and myself spent much time and effort in acquiring a grant from the Social Science Research Council to reanalyse nonexistent data.

The truth is very different. First, Noel Entwistle and I had made a written commitment to SSRC to lodge the data in their data archives as soon as we had completed our reanalysis. Secondly, in our proposal to SSRC, dated February 16, 1976, Murray Atkin and I stated that there would be a thorough reanalysis of these data including both the

teacher typology and pupil response data sets. To this end, all achievement and personality data of every child had to be retained together with their descriptive and imaginative stories.

All data from these sources have been transferred on to a master record which was complete. In addition, all data were further transferred on to computer card and file as all the original computer analyses were retained. The teacher questionnaires were not retained after a sample had been chosen because the relevant data were transferred to a computer listing after each checking by an experienced coder. This listing contained all the data which had created the teacher typology and was available to a researcher interested in replicating or checking our classification. Also, the original analyses of all parts of the questionnaires were retained.

Finally, the questionnaires of 37 teachers chosen to complete a sample were kept. All these were lodged in the SSRC and 18 months ago. The only search I can recall was simply to locate one computer listing in an extremely large file of computer print-outs.

If these verifiable facts are juxtaposed with Hesketh's assertion in "Professor Bennett had thrown a teaching styles data away because he explained, he thought it would not be needed for reanalysis", it is clearly apparent that this statement is blatantly untrue and unjustified. It casts a damaging professional slur on myself and my colleagues. Social science researchers generally welcome criticism as long as it is demagogic and accurate. But scurrilous attacks based on dishonesty are unacceptable neither in the social sciences nor in law.

Neither can *The Times Educational Supplement* escape similar criticism. Not only was the article accepted and published without attempt to assess its truthfulness or worse, sensation-seeking headlines were concocted such as "Teaching Styles: the missing data" on the front page, and "Neville Bennett: Should he have thrown away the data?" on page 15. Such irresponsible reporting surely falls far short of what is acceptable in the educational press.

Regrettably the bulk of Hesketh's article is full of errors and demonstrates a lack of understanding of social science research. Perhaps this understandable given that her training is in computing. No self-respecting social scientist would put on hearsay evidence to claim that some of the original clusters were hollow or badly formed while her analyses were available to dispute this.

Neither does she appear to have any understanding of how data and their analysis relate to theory and purpose. She asserts that the question of types was unnecessary but in fact the theoretical perspective adopted demanded it. As such, her analysis was the most appropriate tool just as it was in Barker's "Streaming" study and the recent Oracle studies, both of which were identical analyses.

Finally she fails to appreciate that in a rapidly developing field theory and technology also change rapidly. As I have indicated elsewhere, the theory of teaching underpinning formal and informal teaching has lived its usefulness in the light of more recent data and theory development. And the improvement of technology was of course the primary reason why Murray and I acquired the grant which led to the reanalysis.

Finally, in case your readers have been led to the view that the article represents an internal wrangle which has spread to the pages of the national press, I can clearly assure that this is not so. These issues were never broached during her brief period of employment here. Her motive for writing the article is thus incontestable as its content is incontestable.

S. N. BENNETT, Department of Educational Research, University of Lancaster.

## A future with purpose for the young - Youth City

Sir, - We cannot compel our young people to occupy themselves purposefully and all forms of community service which carry a penalty for non-compliance are doomed to fail. Neither should we appeal to their social or environmental conscience with rare exceptions it simply isn't there. So armies of volunteers picking up litter or helping old ladies are out too.

What we could do is to offer young people a chance to build and live in their own city. Youth City. The idea would be to offer every one between 16 and 24 membership of a youth movement which would construct and own its own property and facilities.

Derelict houses could be converted, wasteland turned into arenas for pop concerts or all-weather pitches, abandoned cottages made habitable - the schemes could vary in size from a block of flats to a pair of terraced houses. The difference between these and other similar schemes would be the right of young people to meet, to cook and to live in their houses - and to visit and use similar facilities in other towns and countries.

This leads to a second element of Youth City - travel.

From very small beginnings a network of places to stay and things to do would begin to emerge and young people could work alongside others

from different parts of the country or indeed different parts of the world, with many possibilities of learning from each other, not just language but culture and customs too.

Tools and skills would be provided by Government - part of Len Murray's appeal for millions of pounds to reconstruct our cities - mostly through the workshops of the Manpower Services Commission. The MSC would manage Youth City too in the early stages, until the young citizens were organized enough to take it over.

A simplified and fairer system of pay for 16 to 24-year-olds would sweep away the present hotch-potch of grants, allowances and subsidies -

what on earth is the justification for paying one 17-year-old (unemployed) £23.50 per week, and another (sixth form) nothing at all?

My plan begs many questions but would restore a sense of purpose and self-esteem to those who elected to join in. And what implications it could have for the last two years at school. There really would be some point in acquiring useful knowledge and skills, in working in groups, in problem solving - so as to build their own immediate future.

BOB FINCH, 11 St George's Square, London SW1.

## Disorderly outing

Sir, - On a recent day trip across the Channel I felt quite ashamed of belonging to the teaching profession. Hordes of schoolchildren were marauding around the boat, while their teachers were holed up in the bar or browsing in the duty free shop. I'm quite sure that some pretended not to be with their children.

Boulogne was no different, still hordes of children obviously showing the French people what little concern we have for manners and discipline in our schools.

My shame turned to anger and resentment when on the return journey the ferry, half an hour out of Boulogne, had to turn back because of a medical emergency. It appears that during a brawl in the games room a boy was stabbed. The result was that a one hour forty minutes journey took four hours.

We rely on public opinion to back us in our job and to respect what we are trying to do. You can imagine what the crew thought about our profession when their 12 hour shift lasted 16 hours. Our image in the eyes of the fare paying public was not enhanced either.

ROY ATHERTON, Woodstock Manor School, Woodstock, Oxford.

## Council control

Sir, - I read Philip Venning's article on the General Teaching Council (June 19) with great interest. It is a measure of the undoubted awareness which the Campaign for the Council (CATEC) is arousing that there are an increasing number of articles relating to its foundation. In spite of its provocative tone the article did contain many of the practical advantages which a Teaching Council would give, and its conclusions belied many of its comments. Teachers and teacher unions do care sufficiently to make it part of their conference resolutions year after year, and a Council does matter if only because most professional teachers would welcome some larger control of entry qualifications, codes of conduct and training procedures. Mr Venning has moreover confused the obvious practical difficulties of setting up a Council with the principle that one should exist. Practical problems are for the negotiating table, but they do not in themselves destroy the principle, or the wish of teachers to have a council. If this were the case, much trade unionism would have ceased to exist long ago.

P. A. HERRIMAN, The White House, Newnham Bridge, Worcs.

## English retreat

Sir, - Bob Doe's article on the new 16-plus examinations (July 3) rightly draws attention to the various problems raised by the interim proposals being circulated to schools.

I have recently received for consideration the Southern Group 16-plus English Working Party's interim report. This document consists of approximately one and a half A4 typed pages. Aside from the extreme difficulty of commenting precisely on a document of this kind, there are assumptions made which would merit further discussion at this preliminary stage. The document states, for example, that the examination will assess skills which are stated in explicit behavioural terms and that these

"when preceded by the statement 'The examination will test the ability of the candidate to...' in fact constitute the syllabus."

Unfortunately for English teachers being asked to comment on this statement, the skills the working party has in mind are not stated! Similarly, although it is reasonable to say that "a variety of schemes of assessment would be required in order to serve the needs of different kinds of students studying under different conditions", it is difficult to offer a constructive comment unless one knows more precisely what the working party has in mind.

I should, however, like to endorse the apprehension of some English teachers reported by Bob Doe, regarding the future of oral assessment and the role of coursework. I cannot see, for instance, why the Southern Group states that "these methods of assessment (i.e. coursework and oral) would not be suitable for all candidates and it was desirable that at least one scheme should consist entirely of externally assessed written examinations".

It seems as if indeed that, six years after the Bullock Report, after various developments in English teaching since the sixties and when there is a growing realization of the interdependence of reading, writing, listening and talking, the "new" proposals seem, as far as one can judge, to be taking us rapidly back to the old ways of doing so. I suggest, despite the wishes of the majority of English teachers, ED MARUM, Head of English, Erith School, Erith, Kent.

## Nuclear advice

Sir, - The problem of obtaining good objective information and teaching materials on controversial subjects such as nuclear disarmament is revealed in the correspondence arising out of Simon Wheeler's reference to CND and CEM (June 26).

Like CEM, the Council for Education in World Citizenship is non-partisan on such issues, but we do produce broadsheets as objective as possible and giving also alternative sources and publications for further reading. In the case of nuclear arms, there is indeed a dearth of attractive ly presented material defending the nuclear deterrent, and I have for some time been engaged in discussion with the British Atlantic Committee on this very matter.

However, the Arms Control and Disarmament Unit of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office do produce excellent material giving the Government's point of view, and this is available in limited quantities free of charge from the FCO, Downing Street (East), London SW1A 2AH.

In Britain, it has always taken a long time to discover and then obtain material publishing government policy, but I am consoled by the knowledge that the alternative is so much more dangerous! In its resources centre, GEWC does provide wide-ranging examples of material that is available from various sources on most current topics, and these include recent press cuttings. Brandt, Disarmament, the Middle East, have been the subject of this term's Broadsheet: Terrorism, Central America and Northern Ireland are planned for next term. The annual subscription is £2.50.

## Marks of art

Sir, - While wholeheartedly endorsing the notion that the wider objectives of art education cannot be met solely through a programme of practical activities, Peter Dormer's report (July 3), highlights the narrowness of much current thinking about theoretical studies in art and design at secondary level.

The article underlines the familiar, but surely questionable assumption, that it is only through a study of art history that a young person will learn about the great art of the world.

Whether or not this factual knowledge is necessary to a heightened enjoyment of the visual arts is rarely discussed. All attempts to re-examine the place of art history in the school curriculum seem to start from an acceptance of its primacy over other forms of analysis or response. Alternative, non-historical frameworks for the study of theory in schools are not generally considered.

If we wish children to gain deep and lasting pleasure from the intrinsic qualities of works of art (and not simply factual knowledge about the works), they must be introduced to other, supposedly less rigorous and more value laden modes of verbal articulation such as the writings of artists and critics.

Art history is but one component in the understanding of art and not its pre-requisite. If children are to develop skills of appreciation, they must be helped to acquire new powers of perception. This cannot be taken seriously.

Leaving aside her silence on the real merits of the many arguments currently advanced against the cuts, there is a neat irony behind Mary Wainwright's quasi-political moralizing. For the very self-interest which, she implies, explains away and morally discredits any individual or sectional objections are, on her reckoning, no more than crude expressions of self-interest. They need not be taken seriously.

Wainwright's old Adam turns out to be more Smith than myth! PATRICK WILSON, 18 The Greenway, Braunston, Northants.

## Polytechnic life

Sir, - Having just read a rather disparaging account by Peter Skuse (Talkback July 3), of a course on science and technology put on for sixth formers by the Polytechnic of Central London, I would like to redress the balance somewhat.

When I approached the Polytechnic about the possibility of letting a group of about 50 of our sixth formers visit the place to get some kind of idea of what a polytechnic is and what polytechnic life might be like they immediately accepted.

An excellent programme was put on for us, including lectures from staff from different departments as well as the "consumer view" from a number of current polytechnic students. There was also a film about the polytechnic and a guided tour of the school of languages. The sixth formers who attended found the short course extremely beneficial. S. R. LEVISON, The Elthorne High School, Hapwell, London, W7.

adequately achieved by a sole reliance upon either the production of personal artefacts or a study of the history of art.

It is surely important for all art teachers to proceed from a realisation that, in the words of Harold Osborne, the most important learning in art "cannot be reduced to a set of articulate prescriptions or mastered in any straightforward way". ARTHUR HUGHES, Post Graduate Course Director, Birmingham Polytechnic School of Art Education.

Sir, - It was encouraging to read Peter Dormer's article on art history in schools which gave vent to the depressing facts of which I as an art history graduate and teacher have been all too aware for many years.

It is a pity that such a good article should be spoiled by the implications of the final paragraph. The fact that unsatisfactory GCE results are achieved in art history exams need not be a result of "badly pitched" exams. Surely the unsatisfactory results could be the result of the inadequate state of art history in the schools which the article is at pains to point out. The way to achieve satisfactory grades, which I as an A-level examiner have observed, is to increase the quantity and improve the quality of art history teaching and not to tailor the exams to suit the inadequacy of the teaching and the resources.

THEA ANDREWS, 38 Eastern Avenue, Reading.

## Numbers game

Sir, - In a Richard Garner article in the (June 26) *TES*, Mr H. Moore, headmaster of a 600-pupil primary school in Solihull, is quoted as saying that he is "... going to have to mix years from next September..." educationally, that's not sound.

Does one correctly imply from that remark that all small primary schools, obliged by the numbers game to mix ages and abilities, are educationally unsound? On the contrary, I fancy that there are very many village primary school heads like myself who might consider that the impertinence of his comment is exceeded only by the educationally unsound size of his school.

R. M. STEPHENS, Radley CE primary school, Abingdon, Oxon.

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## Robert Laslett on some treatment approaches to maladjusted children

# Conducting with confidence

In the 25 years following the 1945 recognition of maladjusted children as handicapped pupils, those responsible for providing special educational treatment for these children turned to psychiatrists, social workers and psychotherapists for advice and support. They did not turn quite so readily to educational psychologists who were not, in those days, able to provide teachers with much help.

It was therefore inevitable that work with maladjusted children during the 1950s and 1960s was strongly influenced by reference to a medical model to explain the causation and nature of children's adjustment difficulties. The psychiatrists, social workers and psychotherapists gave teachers many valuable insights into maladjusted children's behaviour (as they still do), and child guidance clinics were committed to the support of special schools and units, although this had to be limited because of the time needed for such individual treatment. Generally psychiatrists and psychotherapists tended to advise staff about treatment and management of children, rather than take children on for treatment when they were admitted to special schools.

In the 1970s several developments indicated the need to revise the existing provisions. There was evidence from the Isle of Wight Study, from the National Child Development Study, and from the data collected in an inner London area, which all pointed to a higher prevalence of maladjustment than had previously been recognised.

Then the identification, assessment and referral of maladjusted children was affected by the

appearance of the Department of Education and Science Circular 2/75 "The Discovery of Children Requiring Special Education and Assessment of their Needs." And in 1978, the Warnock Report raised clearly the integration-segregation issue in special education, and indicated the need for changes in the perception of appropriate responses to children with special needs.

During this decade teachers were becoming increasingly aware of the presence of very disruptive children in schools. It is unlikely that all disruptive children are maladjusted, but some of them are, and they all present teachers with considerable problems.

Thus, by the end of the 70s it was clear that there were more maladjusted children than the existing special schools and units could possibly accommodate, and that decisions about their schooling should be made by educationists. This represented a significant shift away from reliance upon medical opinion and towards educational opinion in assessment, and the belief that more maladjusted children should be kept in ordinary schools - not only because segregation could never accommodate the numbers, but also because such a system was inappropriate for many of them.

Change was inevitable and desirable. Appropriate strategies were needed to help teachers in ordinary schools cope with the demands of seriously disruptive children and with the bewildering behaviour of maladjusted children, and that would also improve resources in special schools.

In considering this change and the direction that it should take, the usefulness of the medical model in explaining the behaviour of maladjusted children, a model that had served for many years, also came up for review. Whatever its value to clinicians, teachers in the classroom, especially ordinary school classrooms, sought more immediate solutions to their problems.

Their frustrations and disappointments at conventional methods of referral and treatment were sharpened by the doubts cast on the effectiveness of clinical interventions, even when these were available. Thus the emergence of the behavioural perspective, and the possibility of seeing behavioural and emotional problems in educational and psychological rather than in medical terms, found a receptive audience among teachers.

Moreover, the availability of behaviour modification techniques gave educational psychologists opportunities to provide teachers with effective and appropriate strategies for the classroom. As this, in turn, coincided with the new stance of educational psychologists, as they began to see themselves not as psychometricians only, but also as active advisors and supportive figures for staff, the popularity of behaviour modification grew, with undeniable benefits to children and teachers alike.

It is easy to see why. Behaviour modification makes use of the language and concepts of psychology and education - disciplines familiar to teachers; it is concerned with the alteration of children's behaviour through events in situations which teachers can control; teachers can learn the techniques relatively easily and quickly, although, like any other treatment it can be inappropriately used by those who themselves are not clear about its goals and processes; it can be applied over a very wide range of learning and behavioural problems in children of any age; its effectiveness is immediately apparent and can be quantified; teachers using the techniques can involve children's parents in behaviour modification programmes continued outside school.

But behaviour modification is not a panacea, as those who advocate it recognise. It is one treatment approach among many others. It has limitations.

Among these we might include its specificity - behaviour modified in one situation does not appear to generalise to other situations. Human behaviour is complex: some defiant behaviour is very complex, and in so far as reliance upon behaviour modification techniques suggests otherwise, this is misleading. Some maladjusted children, successfully modifying unacceptable behaviour, might "play the system" and make a series of easily accomplished adaptations. Unless

great care is taken, these adaptations might be a retreat from children's encounters with themselves which, for many of them, are precisely successful adjustment.

As behaviour modification is one treatment approach among many others, it is important that teachers of maladjusted children are aware of what approaches are available so that they make use of the best elements in each. Teachers are not usually purists. They are eclectic, pragmatic, and they must be free to choose treatment approaches which are not appropriate for the children with whom they are concerned, but are also appropriate for the

The use of behaviour modification techniques confines teachers to an interventionist model. There are other models which have been overlooked because of the popularity of behaviour modification.

These alternative models differed from behaviour modification in the assumptions and about children's ability to solve their own problems, with adult support certainly, but much less monitoring, intervention and management; in their emphasis upon listening to children as they describe their problems, reflect upon them and propose solutions to them; in the value they place upon discussion in which children share difficulties, co-operate in problem solving; and in the way to which children are reminded of their responsibility for their behaviour and the consequences of it.

Understanding children's behaviour is a unique understanding and appreciating these in choral music. There is the tune that the things which teachers cannot help but hear - a tune of the child's behaviour. But there are choral parts below the top line, the alto, tenor and bass, which are not always so audible, which make up the music. Below the line are children's experiences of others, their perceptions of themselves, their home life and their relationships, their anxieties and satisfactions, weaknesses and strengths.

For fortunate children these parts make harmony; for maladjusted children they bring discord. When choosing a treatment approach for maladjusted children, teachers should do whatever helps them to hear the child's voice clearly, while they appreciate the effects of other voices in the chorus. They can then conduct with confidence.

Robert Laslett is senior lecturer in the department of special education, Faculty of Education, University of Birmingham.

writer, some anonymous letter-writers and Iris Morrison, deputy warden - "special interest" mass education, multi-ethnic work and the feminist movement". It meets several times a term, usually to discuss a book. Tonight they intend to talk over a meal. Lulled by the warmth and noisy projector, one member dozes off.

At seven o'clock the group breaks up. Most can't make the meal, because of marking, another meeting, or simple exhaustion after an 11-hour day. They chat briefly about the film on the way out, and merge with the departing primaries in the bleak school yard.

Iris Morrison, a member of the community relations council, liaises between minority groups and the schools, reminding teachers of the work of the multi-ethnic Greenwich Young People's Theatre, and the unemployment surveys. "We had thought that the young blacks in this area weren't prepared to travel for interviews - it turned out that they weren't being offered any."

She organizes workshops with titles like "Prejudice" and "Multi-Ethnic Maths". Her teacher groups have studied plus in books, run ethnic cultural events, and advised schools with race problems. "Things have been particularly tough since the Deptford fire," she says.

Her philosophy is straightforward. "We white people should address ourselves to white racism, and leave black people to sort out their own problems." Her approach to sex discrimination is just as direct and all-embracing. There are seminars, workshops and conferences covering topics as disparate as women in science, sex-ratios in literature, in health education, in classroom approval and disapproval, career opportunities and women's involvement in union activities.

"At the centre we are at the interface of local

authority and community needs," says Peter Stammers, the centre's warden. He and Iris Morrison see themselves first and foremost as teachers, using their extra time and resources to explore new areas, and pinpoint those most likely to repay further investigation.

"In the first place we offered teachers a smorgasbord of activities, but we found out what they wanted was more in-depth work, a chance for professional development." This is particularly relevant now that career opportunities are so limited.

Peter Stammers is heavily committed to the sort of classroom research made possible by ILEA's school focus in-service resource money. "We can buy time for teachers to cover in the others can work together on classroom observation and discussion of findings."

Working in "friendship pairs" within the department of between schools, the teachers take turns to observe each other with the aid of a video camera and notetaking. It is a process which shows up the social organization of the class, successful teaching techniques, and what the teacher does.

"Initially," says Peter Stammers, "teachers were very apprehensive." So the sessions offered by the friendship factor is vital, because the process can reveal a class left behind by a mass of information, or the effect of a teacher's facial expressions. Notes taken during a lesson belong to the teaching teachers and cannot be used, discussed or published without their consent. Ground rules are worked out as the research progresses.

"At this early stage it is not easy to quantify the value of these sessions," says Peter Stammers. "But the teachers involved have no doubt about the enhancement of their professional skills."

## 'Whatever cutbacks are encouraged by the Reagan Administration, writing won't suffer.'

### Lynton Robins and Martyn Denscombe report on the expanding 'writing movement' in American universities and colleges

# Shift to the write

We have become convinced during recent years that the low essay grades obtained by some of our weaker social science students were more the result of poor writing skills than of intellectual shortcomings. In an attempt to remedy this we devised a student self-assessment scheme to improve the quality of written assignment work.

Our method was to give students a clear, explicit statement about techniques and, as a corollary, the criteria we would employ when marking the essays. First year undergraduates were given handouts over three consecutive years, which detailed the academic and literary conventions they needed to observe if their work was to be concise and persuasive.

We supplemented these with forms that were issued when the essays were due. These latter forms reiterated the main criteria for successful essay writing. They invited students to assess their own performance on each of the specific criteria, as well as allowing them to comment on other issues relevant to the work.

During the three years the scheme has been in operation we have been aware of its limitations, and have regarded it as a rather modest innovation with specific aims. We have been certain, however, that the procedure has been a positive contribution to teaching methods, proving to be both a quick method for familiarizing students with the aims, techniques and conventions of academic essay writing, and giving the tutor a source of feedback about difficulties faced by students.

We have become equally convinced that innovation along these lines had a far greater potential than our usual procedures, and that we needed to explore the use of self-assessment in other contexts - particularly as it is used in the United States, where student self-grading and peer-assessment is relatively commonplace. Therefore, we recently undertook a sponsored study tour of eight institutions in the United States and Canada, to learn how such innovations might be developed within a polytechnic.

We found that we had stumbled into a much wider curriculum development issue, frequently referred to as the "writing movement", and which we, as non-specialists in the area, must be forgiven for discovering some five or six years after its birth within American higher education.

All the universities and colleges we visited had "writing centres" - sometimes known as "writing clinics" or "writing laboratories" - to which students deemed deficient in basic writing skills were referred. An increasing number of institutions offer courses, sometimes compulsory, in the area of "freshman rhetoric" or "elementary composition".

The writing movement is in many ways the university reflex to poor Johnny, who could not read at school and now cannot write at college. Faculty staff agree that while students' verbal and passive learning skills were generally good, they were poor on writing. An education professor that we interviewed estimated that as few as 10 per cent of his university's graduates were "truly literate", with somewhere between 40 to 60 per cent "unable to write with competence". We thought that this might have been a somewhat exaggerated judgment about the extent of weakness in writing, until we visited another campus, where all freshmen were tested within the first 10 days of their university careers. The result was that 55 per cent were placed in a remedial writing course.

The way in which the problem of poor writing was recognized and dealt with in the universities was impressive. One college monitored students' writing performance through awarding two grades at the end of each course: one being the traditional course grade which goes towards the calculation of the "grade point average", the other being a simple satisfactory/unsatisfactory assessment for writing competence.

To pass each course the student must be

assessed as satisfactory in terms of their writing ability. In the event of an unsatisfactory grade being awarded, the student concerned was automatically referred to the writing centre for individual tuition, until the deficiency was removed.

The writing centres we visited were each headed by a "rhetorician", received secretarial support, and were largely staffed by graduate students. Once students had been referred for remedial tuition and their writing problems had been diagnosed, the centre's staff were able to utilize a variety of aids, including handouts for improving specific skills, taped instructions packages, and do-it-yourself programmed writing exercises.

All tuition was conducted in an informal atmosphere. We were informed that students did not generally resent coming to the centres and, indeed, there was always a small number who came through their own volition.

But, in spite of the extensive reliance on writing centres to bolster students' academic performance, writing skills as such have not been entirely accepted as an integral part of the staff structure. In one centre the rhetorician had both administrative and faculty duties, and it was made clear that one role impeded the other.

In another college the rhetorician's post was part-time only, and in a third case we were told that whoever held the post of rhetorician would be most unlikely to get tenure. It seems that, in spite of widespread support, the writing movement is the latest in a long line of innovations in the universities, and has arrived at the worst time for resource allocation.

Whatever the problems inside the university structure, however, there appeared to be sufficient support for the growth of writing courses from areas like the business community to assure their continued expansion. In addition to basic courses, we found examples of many specialized options, vocational areas such as "business and administrative writing", "engineering report writing" and "public affairs reporting".

At one point we asked our host if the writing movement and the proliferation of courses that had followed in its wake was really no more than a "jobs for the boys" exercise, to mop up otherwise unemployed English Literature specialists. In answer our attention was first drawn to a survey covered in *The Wall Street Journal*, in which employers placed written communication skills top of a list of qualities they sought in potential recruits to management. Far down the list of priorities were "knowledge of business and economics" and "academic performance". The point had been made that there was a genuine need that was now being met.

Secondly, we were told that links between the writing movement and the English departments were surprisingly weak. Only in the smaller

colleges would there be a blurred distinction between the two. In bigger institutions writing centres and writing programmes were at the very least semi-autonomous. Our host said that of the 15 courses on offer in her university's "Business and Professional Writing" minor, which drew on 75 members of staff, only four were serviced by the English department.

Such widespread course development has been accompanied by a publishing boom on the topic of rhetoric. We found the revised but still rather dated text by J. C. Hodges and M. E. Whitten, *Harbrace College Handbook*, being used as a course book on three introductory courses, although it was being replaced in one by F. J. D'Angelo's *Process and Thought in Composition*. M. Hairston's *A Contemporary Rhetoric* was recommended to us, and we were impressed by W. E. Messenger and J. de Bruyn's *The Canadian Writer's Handbook*, and S. Baker's *The Practical Stylist*.

The writing movement, we were assured, was still expanding. The laggardly are still considering the setting up of writing centres and/or launching freshman programmes; others are developing writing courses still further, with minors about to be accompanied by majors; the leaders in the field already offer a graduate qualification in writing. Those we had talked to saw the writing movement firmly established as a permanent feature in the university landscape.

"Whatever cutbacks are encouraged by the Reagan Administration, writing won't suffer," we were told, "it's a sacred cow." This made sense, since the rhetoricians and the president shared the same purpose in trying to reinvent the standards of a golden past.

Lynton Robins lectures in politics, and Martyn Denscombe in sociology, at Leicester Polytechnic.





# Talkback

Last month we invited readers to try their hand at a question which appeared in this year's Oxford Local English Language O Level paper. Today we print four of the entries we received, together with the original answer submitted by John Daniel, who first drew our attention to the question.

"Write an article for your school magazine about Colonel Munro, your new Chairman of Governors, selecting your information from the paragraph below:

MUNRO, Henry Antony b. Ascot, 1932. 2nd son of Antony Paul Munro and Emily Ann (née Topping). Educated at Ascot School. Captain of the School, Captain of Cricket Higher Certificate with distinctions in Mathematics, Physics and Geography. Subsidiary subjects Russian and French. National Service in Royal Army Service Corps 1951. Commissioned 2nd Lieutenant in Royal Tank Regiment, Oct. 1952. Regular commissions: Lieut. 1954, Captain 1960, seconded as a Temporary Major (Instructor) in Royal Thai Land Army 1962. Special duties in Burma, India, and Thailand. Lt. Colonel 1970. Awarded DSO and awarded out of army. Publications: *Indian Butterflies*, *Thai Temples*, *The Irish House* (novel). Married Mary Smith 1971, sons born 1973 and 1975. Home: London."

## Last of a kind

Bob Taylor

It is with the deepest regret but, unfortunately, with no surprise that the school learns of the death of Colonel Munro, our new chairman of governors, for the event occurred before the assembled school on speech day last Friday.

The tragic nature of his end needs no reiteration here, but testifies to the colonel's passionate loyalty to the traditions of this school, traditions which he felt were "being totally annihilated and breached".

The sword which Colonel Munro whirled about his head, following the headmaster's announcement of comprehensive reorganization, was carried at Agincourt by his ancestor ("Mon Roux"), a companion of Henry V's early years. The Colonel was the last of eight generations of Munros to give military service to the Crown. His sons, Bernard and Order, studying at Middlesex Polytechnic and Essex University, are considered unlikely to maintain this tradition.

The Colonel was a man of varied talents. While commanding a Heavy Artillery Unit in the Far East he found time to execute a series of lovingly-detailed drawings of Thai temples. As the only surviving record of these monuments, razed to the ground soon after in action against rebel insurgents, the drawings were highly acclaimed on the international market.

A similar reception greeted the Colonel's drawings of Indian butterflies, completed shortly before the British Army's experiments with ammonia-phosgene rendered the species virtually extinct. Ironically, it was this same chemical which later caused the Colonel's severe bronchial condition, when he and his company were on Special Duty in West Belfast, and the wind unexpectedly changed direction. Invalided out of the army, after a distinguished career abroad, the Colonel retired back to England. ("Just another native son to set a foot on.") Unable to obtain an independent school bursarship, he came to us through Army Clearance as chairman of the governors.

However, he now found himself in a world from which he was increasingly alienated. He would, for example, have deplored the petty workmanlike behind the university workman which topped him last Friday, toppling him over the edge of the school stage, and finally, impaled him on the sword of his ancestors.

## One of the old Thai school

A. E. J. Jones

The school is honoured by the election of Colonel Henry (Jumbo) Munro as chairman of governors.

Henry Antony Munro is the son of the distinguished tie-manufacturer and educational philanthropist, A. P. Munro, founder and principal debenture holder of Ascot School, and Emily, known in her debutante days "Dream" Topping.

At Ascot, Henry was an all-rounder. Captain of School and of Cricket, he scored a thousand runs and took one hundred wickets in May, while preparing for Higher School examinations.

Rumours that his abilities in Russian led to co-operation from the KGB, in giving him advance details of other papers in which he gained distinctions, were strenuously denied by his Godfather, Comrade Beria. The accusations left their scar, however. Abandoning the prospect of a glittering academic career at Balliol with the words "C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas le gare," Henry elected to do National Service with the RASC.

His transports were not all of delight. Hence, he transferred to the 2nd Blankshires, was commissioned and later granted a regular commission. He was seconded to the Thai Army as Instructor-Major (Temporary, Acting, Jumbal) in 1962. While in Thailand he gained his sobriquet, "Jumbo", in

consequence of his skill in riding the Royal House of a superfluity of white elephants.

Having introduced golf to the country, he persuaded wealthy Thais to use the elephants both as caddies and green-rollers. So he established lasting links with the Thais. Almost simultaneously, through his father's influence, he made contact with the Burmese, introducing them to English neckwear. Thus he made ties with the Burmese.

His period of special duty in India and Burma is shrouded in mystery. Rumour hath it that his publication of *Indian Butterflies* was a cover for engaging in arduous researches among the lesser-known bazaars of Calcutta.

At Ascot, his next book, is an erudite discourse on the upper cranial features of the indigenous population—a highly specialized text demanding very close contact with the natives. It was this production which may have led to his promotion and subsequent posting to Northern Ireland.

His promotion was also marked by his marriage to Mary Smith, the well-known NAAFI manageress, whom he met on a staff course at Sandhurst. She accompanied him to Ireland, where his distinguished career came to an untimely end.

While researching at Stormont for his novel, *The Irish House*, he was set upon by a well-known Irish cleric, who objected to Irish Government's being considered worthy of fiction. Having been deafened by protestant shouts, Colonel Munro was invalided from the service, and now lives quietly in London, surrounded by his collection of butterfly nets.

ably helping him with his book on *Thai Temples*. He confessed all to M16, only to be taken on as a double-agent.

A veil must be drawn over his subsequent "special duties" in Burma, India and Tibet. So skilled a traitor was he that he returned to Britain to take charge of the infiltration of the IRA by redundant teachers as a promoted Lieutenant-Colonel in the Education Corps.

With his new, 18-year-old beauty queen, wife, Mary Smith, he frequented the bordellos of the republic, while researching for his novel, *The Irish House*. His wife's chance encounter with an upstairs room with his former KGB contacts was a disaster.

The Russians were attempting to ruin the Common Agricultural Policy by flooding Irish supermarkets with Golden Delicious, and arranged a secret rendezvous with Munro behind the soft fruit counter of Dublin Tesco, only for both men to be gunned down by a distraught Worcester Pearmain rep just after they arrived.

Comprehensively redeemed and insured, Munro returned to mainland Britain to a hero's welcome, a DSO, and speech therapy for his war wound. His grievous injuries will sadly preclude any verbal utterances at meetings, but the headmaster is said to be delighted at his appointment.

Michael Laimlinman won a closed exhibition (three years ago), "Hammy", as he is affectionately known, was polymath and polyglot, and a leg-splinterer of distinction. In his final year he was captain of a strong XI, which included such luminaries as D. A. Gibson (Cambridge and England) and H. Temperley (Minor Counties).

Spurning a certain place at Grogville and Caius (where E. Tomlinson '73-'74 is reading Natural Science), for the University of Life, Hammy began his National Service in 1951. His promotion was rapid, and he was a member of the regional eight-man bob-sleigh team, and the Trimley Bridge Club, where his variation of the Holding Strayman bid was first developed.

Not long after winning his bronze in the 1960 Olympics, Hammy left these shores as a "trouble-shooter" to the Royal Thai Army. Working under the direct command of Prince Peing Tse-tuck, he moulded diverse warring factions into a modern fighting unit.

A chance meeting with U Thant led to Hammy's most exciting mission. With a hand-picked force of a dozen Thai peasants five years waging war on the dope-growers of the infamous Golden Triangle. It was largely due to the work of "Munro's Marauders" that the Bangkok connexion was smashed. Hammy's kit-bag has always held the scholar's pen as well as the soldier's baton. His monograph *Indian Butterflies* was responsible for opening up the sub-continent to international lip-droptery. (OHS will be pleased to learn



Elaine McDermott

## Butterflies are safer

John Daniel

Poor Henry! What happened? Was it his endless prowling around the golf-course a mile from Ascot School, watching the couples in the long grass? Was it his obsession with Smith Minor's blond locks? Or was it just the Fifties?

School Captain, Cricket Captain, distinctions in Higher Cert in maths, physics and geography. When he left school that summer of '51, Henry felt that life was over. Nobody told him he could work in a mental hospital in Wales instead of doing National Service. He tried for a commission in the 9th Hussars but was posted to the RASC.

The Service Corps! Henry loathed checking filthy trucks and crawling under greasy generators. And the officers mess was full of ex-sergeants who didn't know whether to pass the port to the left or the right. Henry contacted a friend in the Royal Blankshires and transferred regiments.

He had a drawn-out, unhappy affair with another officer's wife who turned out to be a socialist. Whiv don't you study butterflies? suggested the adjutant when it all came to light, and Henry, now a captain, was seconded as Temporary Major (Instructor) to the Royal Thai Land Army. "Much prettier than women in my opinion. Safer too."

It was 1962 and weird things were beginning to happen in the Western world. Young men wore their hair long; Vietnam started; Henry chased his butterflies through the ruins of Thai temples and wrote two short monographs, published by the Lepi-

dopterist Press. But he was getting depressed at promotion to Lt. Colonel did not seem to lift it. He was 38, cocoon in the clammy jungle and surrounded by Communist butterflies. Henry drank steadily and returned home.

1970 was a golden year for Henry. He proposed to Mary on the lawn of the Ascot golf-club and Mary accepted. She had always wanted to get rid of her surname, which was Smith, and to marry an Army officer who could write.

They went to live in Belfast where Henry was posted with the Royal Blankshires. Ireland was even more confusing than Vietnam, and there were no butterflies in Ireland. Henry started drinking again. Mary got pregnant and writing a novel called *The Irish House*.

One morning Henry turned the key of his car and was fortunate that the bomb under the radiator only blew his leg off. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Order and invalided out of the army. "New mind," Mary said. "We can go back to Ascot. They want you to be chairman of their governors."

They wheeled Henry in. He was nearly 50, smashed to bits, but a war-hero clearly expected to make a contribution to his old school. "These are hard times," he said. "The faces bobbing in front of me. 'We are being invaded by India butterflies. It will cost £5 billion to build an Irish house. Education is not what it was.'"

They all cheered. Old School Captain, Old Captain of Cricket, chairman of governors went there, seen far worse than old Henry. "Worse. It was a damned mess. Mother a Topping too. One of the Devon Toppings. But the old school was the old school. And as long as there were men like Henry around, it would stay that way."

that K. Jensen '55-'60 is now manager of the Bombay branch of the Bank of Calcutta).

His second volume, *Thai Temples*, was described by *The British Architectural Review* as "the classic on the Oriental stonemason and the Caucasian theodolite".

Recalled to Harold Wilson's Britain in 1970, Hammy was unhappy behind a desk in the labyrinth of the Ministry of Defence. He was soon back in the land of things, leading the fight against the insurgency.

The explosion of a milk churn on the side of the Crossmaglen Co-op depressed him of both sight and hearing, but it was not until his platoon were in safety that he would consent to being moved. His gallantry won him the DSO.

# A journey into truth

In these extracts from her forthcoming book,

Paddy Kitchen looks at what it takes to write a novel



"I think everyone who does not need to be a writer, who thinks he can do something else, ought to do something else," said Simonon in an interview. He added that he considered writing to be "not a profession, but a vocation of unhappiness". I don't share that extreme view, but I would never recommend it as a comfortable occupation.

The two things most often said about being a novelist are that it is hard work and that it is lonely — bald statements that by themselves do not mean very much. It can be hard work, but so can nursing, mining or deep-sea diving. And it is lonely in the sense that you work by yourself, but it is that very condition that so often appeals to people. To have an occupation that requires only a quiet space, paper, and a writing instrument — what heaven! As someone who likes to work on my own, I agree. But working entirely on one's own can be difficult for two reasons.

The first concerns discipline. While writing can be a fluent, joyous process, it can also be the difficult chore you want to avoid at all costs. However, like singing, swimming, dieting or meditating you have to keep at it regularly if you're to achieve anything. The second reason is the lack of feedback. Most jobs and occupations bring contact with other people. That contact is not always pleasant, yet the actual process of commands, consultations, assessments, disagreements, achievements, failures — mostly on a very minor scale — carry one through the working day and give it automatically a content and a tempo. But whether your writing day consists of sitting gloomily in front of a blank piece of paper or enthusiastically finishing the whole chapter, there will be no outside feedback; just the blank page to greet you the following morning, or a pile of manuscript to read and correct.

To decide to write a novel is a curious business. Unlike swimming the channel, you do not need to tell anybody, to elicit aid. Not in the beginning. It can be a complete secret. But if it is ever to get further than just a beginning, a brief scurry into prose, the idea that sparks the novel has got to set in your consciousness with the potentiality and privacy of a seed on good soil.

The best time to embark on the writing is when the idea has been lodged in your mind for some time but you still show no signs of losing interest in it. To begin a novel when you are already slightly bored with the idea is futile. It needs to be running alive — nagging, unfolding.

You may already have got notes or diaries or short pieces that connect with a theme. Get them all together and take a dispassionate look at them. Do they seem to add up to something, point towards further development? Do they still interest you? If so, perhaps try writing some more, filling in the gaps. Or re-writing what you already have: expanding it, drawing it together.

If you have not yet written anything that connects with your theme, sit down and do so. You don't necessarily have to begin at the beginning. Choose a key scene, or a particular emotional experience that is part of the complex that clusters around the theme, and write it out. Write as strongly, as feelingly as you can. Don't be afraid. No one else need read it. Then come back the next day and see what you've got. Perhaps continue that process for a week or two. Try to write something every day; that way it will become part of your life. As Hemingway said, "You can't wait until you're inspired. You have to write when you're not inspired. You have to write when you're not inspired. You have to write when you're not inspired."

This is all very well, you may say, but what should my novel be about? I mean I have this experience at the back of my mind of when I was a refugee in Wales during the war and it links to my parents going to the seaside to retire — I can't really explain why — but is that likely to turn into a novel? And I can't answer that one. All I can say is — go to your writing space every day and get something down. Does the actual production of words, the immersion in your idea, make the theme more firm? Does it take hold? Does it, like a skeleton under flesh, seem to have a form to hold it together?

Or does it all just leak away, like a puddle in the lawn after a storm, and leave you with nothing you feel you can really work on? (Warning: don't answer that question too minutely, or even two days after writing something; look at it two weeks, or preferably two months, later.)

To some this will all seem far too vague. You know the story you want to write, be it based on your experience as a social worker or a fantasy set in Atlantis, and you don't want to begin in the vague, unplanned way I have just described. You will begin at the beginning. But how far should you map your journey?

If you are going to have a complex plot, and particularly if your narrative is going to depend heavily on the development and pace of specific events, then it is essential to plan out the story. There is nothing more maddening than writing 150 pages only to discover that the confrontation you had intended around the end of Chapter 4 can't happen because one of the protagonists was unexpectedly imprisoned in Chapter 3. Obviously any story which relies on suspense and surprise must be carefully thought out. This doesn't mean that things can't be changed during the writing, but you do need to be assured from the start that your intended story actually contains the right ingredients to produce shocks and reversals.

And are you confident of depicting the scenes which you plan? You don't need to be run over to write about an accident, but can you describe it convincingly? It is possible to set a book in a continent you have never visited — Saul Bellow did it in his African novel *Henderson the Rain King* — but that continent needs to have quite a hold on your imagination. It is no good thinking your spies will go to Berlin just because John Le Carré's spies go there. Can you see Berlin in your mind? Your Berlin, I mean, not Le Carré's.

Above all, of course, are you going to sustain an interest in your characters for a whole book, and do you know enough about them to understand how the action will affect and change them? Some writers go so far as to have a card index with details of their characters' background, behaviour and appearance neatly recorded, though others would find this a cumbersome apparatus. Don't stultify yourself with planning, but don't embark on Chapter One with just a whim and an anecdote.

"I couldn't write a whole book," a student will say. "How do you ever finish so many pages?" My stock reply is, "If you write one page a day for a year, you'll have quite a long novel!"

If you choose a work rhythm, be it a page a day or twenty each weekend, an hour before breakfast or four hours after supper, try to stick to it. The only way to make the pile of pages grow is to write another page. Once you reach half way, the end becomes not only possible but probable. You've proved you can reach the middle of the tunnel so you might just as well press on to the light at the end.

Some of you, however, will need to test your impulses and capabilities before taking the plunge. There is a London Transport recruitment poster which reads, "When you look in the mirror, do you see a Bus Driver?" You are not at all sure that when you look in the mirror you see a Novelist or are ever likely to.

The obvious question — do you enjoy writing? Can you sustain an interest in a piece of your own prose, be it a letter, or an office memorandum, or a piece of fiction? Can you build it, and shape it, and try to make it as sharp as possible? For although one side of writing is the outpouring

aspect, the tumble of words that take you by surprise when you read them back the next day, the obverse side is to do with conscious building: shifting the phrases around, heightening with an adjective here, deleting a superfluous adverb there.

Another question — what do you read? There is one way in which a student on a writing course can annoy me intensely. This is to reply, "Oh — I don't really know. I can't think of anything specific just now," to that question. The best way to find out how novels are written is to read them. And it is essential to find the novel form itself of interest. By which I do not mean of interest simply as a vehicle to achieve literary fame or a glossy life-style. Should you find novel-reading rather a bore, and the things you write pretty dull, then no amount of ambition to become a novelist because it sounds glamorous will do. Interest — shining, intense, exuberant, painful, painstaking, passionate interest in the existence and creation of prose fiction is essential.

The sort of comment I mistrust is when someone says, "This book's a load of rubbish, I could write a better one." In the tones of the ignorant, bewildered, and therefore angry parent who claims their child paints better than Picasso. The student who can experience the sensation described by Bamber Gascoigne as that "miraculous late-for-meals long-on-the-lavatory seized-by-a-book feeling" will learn far more from their reading than the easily-irked student anxious to belittle.

One of the most awkward stages is when you have finished a novel, but you've been told, or sense, that it is not yet "right". You have a feeling of responsibility towards it — it still interests you enough for you to want to make improvements. It has something going for it, and deserves further diligence. How can you alter the marks on that floppy pack of pages so they take on a firmer character and become less easy to put down? How do you get to the stage where you feel in some measure to be in control?

First, I think, put the manuscript away for at least a month and try to forget about it. During that period read other people's books, watch plays, listen to poetry — whatever takes your fancy; but allow your mind to experience freely other people's creations.

Then set aside a quiet time when you can read your manuscript through and make comments and assessments. Perhaps a weekend, or the consecutive evenings of a single week. But an intense period so that you have a chance to view your book as a whole. It may be that you will end up wanting to reject it entirely. As long as this is a sense of having passed through a stage, or no longer having the interest to improve the structure and the texture of the writing because you genuinely feel the theme is not important enough, that is fine. It is particularly fine if you already have a new theme bubbling up which you are excited about. But please don't reject the book on the grounds that you have failed because it is not as good as the Doris Lessing or the Malcolm Bradbury or the John Updike you have just been reading, even though you feel it is still valid as an idea. Most writers' first efforts never see the light of day. Learning to improve is the hardest part of all.

Cary Grant was recently reported to have said, "I usually wake around three and read for an hour or so. Never fiction. If it's not true, what's the point of it?"

You'll find there are quite a lot of people who agree with him. Facts, verifiable facts: are what they believe will enable them to get to grips with the world. To read a novel is to fritter away time.

They do not understand that the process of making good fiction is a journey into truth. That by convincing and involving a reader in your theme, your setting, your characters, you have given him something to add to the knowledge we all collect which helps us to understand more about other people and about ourselves. Could anyone really believe that *Anna Karenina* tells us anything about love and infidelity and rejection and despair that could not be better learned from a journalist's factual reconstruction of the events leading to a woman's suicide?

From *The Way to Write Novels* by Paddy Kitchen, to be published on August 27 by Elm Tree Books at £6.50 and £4.50.



arts

# Torso after plaster cast

Michael Clarke on Picasso

Picasso's Picasso.  
Hayward Gallery until October 11.

At the very beginning of the exhibition there is an adolescent drawing of the 1890s, "Study of a torso after a plaster cast", a reminder of academic authority and an assertion of Picasso's mastery of its methods. Upstairs, almost 70 years later, is a cut-metal torso, "Woman with hat", in which the mastery, this time is of Cubist form and all assertion long since gone. Wilful and competitive, Picasso's art is essentially autobiographical and from beginning to end the central subject is the human figure, that academic motif par excellence, which he forced through innumerable formal hoops.

Not all Picasso's Picassos are on show but this enormous exhibition provides both sharp pleasure and some small surprises. In 1907, when Picasso was most enthusiastic about African sculpture, we see him imposing the same carved rhythms onto the inappropriate subject of "Landscape". Five years later that revolutionary combination of painted Cubist canvases with collage cloth, "Still life with chair caning", turns out to be only a few square inches, including its notorious, hemp-rope frame. With many equally important works missing, however, this is not the occasion for major reassessments. Where reconsideration of received opinions does seem proper is of the different phases and aspects of his career.

One section in the exhibition, the so-called neo-classical period, almost

invites re-evaluation. Those who sympathise with the revival of traditional representation should, nevertheless, pay attention to Christopher Green's sensible guide. At no time was Picasso ever seduced by naturalism and in an apparently straightforward drawing like "The Artist's living-room, rue La Boetie", the superficially secure posing of the sitters is contradicted by the inconsistent perspective of the room they occupy. This could be Picasso mocking the haut-bourgeois life-style favoured by his wife, Olga, but elsewhere in the section and in more ambitious works other, anti-natural elements are present, like the huge feet and hands of the "Seated Woman".

The most likely explanation for his return to the academic tradition is that after the revolutionary release of Cubism he felt free to challenge that tradition on his own terms. With an already large, visual culture this was only a more forthright example of him exploiting, extending and reinterpreting subjects, themes and meanings that had occupied artists right back to the ancients. In the thirties Picasso's interest in the classical deepened and in the second of two sections connecting him with the Surrealists we witness this museum culture at its most explicit; his identification with the minotaur.

In the justly famous "Vollard Suite" he compounds autobiographical material with archaic mythology in a most sophisticated way. Iconographically complex, these etchings sometimes defy exact interpretation but their potent imagery, expressive form and often brilliant execution demand excited attention.

Always a friend of poets and a writer himself, Picasso never came closer to literature than he does here.

It was not the literary interests of the Surrealists, however, that influenced Picasso's art but the achievements of its painters. Whatever Miró's debts were to Cubism by the mid-twenties he was painting near-abstract, biomorphic pictures of such a radical kind that Picasso could not ignore them. In "The Painter and his model" of 1926 we see Picasso including the organic, flowing forms and shifts of scale associated with his fellow-Spaniard. He does not surrender to the new pictorial structure initiated by Miró but lets the forms influence the development of possibilities contained within his own past work. In most of the paintings and sculptures of the twenties and thirties Picasso is exploiting the formal and expressive potentials of post-Cubism; comically flat in the Dinard bathers, regularly boneless in "Nude in a red armchair", and entirely ossified in "Figures by the sea".

Bone-like forms appear in drawings done in 1932 after Grünewald's "Crucifixion". These, together with Picasso's own "Crucifixion" and other related pieces, like the frenzied "Woman with a stiletto", after David's "Death of Marat", are presented in a self-contained space as if to fend off their violence. But even in work done at the time of the Spanish Civil War, like the weeping women in this exhibition, the harrowing effect does not exceed the terrible dimensions of this chamber of horrors and it is with relief that one turns to the seductive, but contemptuous, paintings and sculptures nearby; the ones related to Picasso's affair with Marie-Thérèse Walter.

Soon after he had met the girl Picasso was making more innovative sculpture like the "Wire construction" of 1928, which recalls the linear scaffolding of Analytical Cubism, and "Head of a woman", which combines collanders, wire coils and other found items into a welded, collage-like image. By 1931 he had begun a series of heads in bronze that progressively re-formed the features of Marie-Thérèse into increasingly suggestive, ambiguous configurations. Three of them are very large but for some odd reason they are exhibited not only on a platform, which would be suitable enough, but on tall bases too, far up above over heads.



Le peintre et son modèle, Paris 1926

In both the sculptures and the painting the competition this time is with Picasso's old rival Matisse. The voluptuous, reclining nude was already a subject territorialized by this hedonistic master, and earlier Matisse had done a similar series of heads from the mid-Jeanette. What distinguishes a voluptuous Picasso, however, is more explicit sexuality and a greater violence of expression. These lines of Marie-Thérèse are not odalisque; Picasso was always more excited by the primitive than the exotic.

During the Second World War Picasso's rich repertoire of formal techniques was evidently being fed to every occasion and not until the Occupation were there things, "The Kitchen", painted "of nothing", is more adventure and "The Shadow", painted after separation from Françoise Gilot, is poignantly moving. Most, however, are predictable; works which only have come from Picasso's hand but have him and his habits stamped all over them. There are of course the works of a major artist but the passion has gone. Some are as low as that early plaster cast.

Equally encouraging was the enterprising programme choice of many groups: Latimer School's finely played *Adagio for clarinet and strings* (attributed to Wagner) and Barry Russell's polychromatic, polytextural yet tightly and inventively written *Encounter* for his Holmleigh High School Orchestra.

The afternoon's Chamber Ensembles suffered most from a lack of rapport with their tiny audience in such a large hall. Too many groups played rather than performed: refreshing exceptions to the rule were Bury School's Bassoon Ensemble with their agile and witty Corrette and Dubois pieces, and Wantage Sixth Form College's sophisticated, mature and constantly engaging *Crosswalk* by Richard Rodney Bennett. Cromwell Scott Quartet's "Death and the Maiden" was unforgettable too for

arts

# Blessed Cecilia, appear in visions. . .

Hilary Finch and Simon Mundy at the National Festival of Music for Youth

If this year's Festival got off to rather a slow start on Wednesday it was due as much to the poor audiences that the Senior Schools Orchestras and Chamber Music classes drew this year, having a marked effect on the strength of performance projection. But at a time when peripatetic string coaching is being cut back and wind and brass, with their extra band experience, seem to be flourishing, it was encouraging to hear such quality and character of string tone from the Senior Schools Orchestras, from Moseley Chamber Orchestra's exquisite filigree of fine intonation and rhythmic control in their Boccherini and testing Lutoslawski to the hauntingly beautiful solo violin playing against the fine, grained ensemble of King Edward VI's (Chelmsford) St Paul's Suite.

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its mature musicianship, even if technically they were overstretched. The concert hall was transformed on Thursday, a day of constantly and stimulatingly heterogeneous Junior musicmaking which packed in an audience as vast and lively as last year's jazz jamboree. By 3.15 they had to stop selling tickets. Much credit for keeping mental and physical control of such an unwieldy audience must go to the adjudicators who took it in turns to comment and entertain between every three or four items.

There can be few concert programmes of such wholehearted and engaging enterprise and execution; in this context the year's motto, emblazoned on tee-shirt and banner, "Keep music alive in our schools", was both a grim warning and a defiant boast.

Of all the 29 groups, those without conductors frequently achieved the highest technical and performance standards. Sevenoaks Primary Recorder Ensemble with their singing, fluent part-playing, Danesholme Recorder Ensemble with their astute, mature performance of Britten's *Scherzo*, and Whitley Bay Middle School's tight and musical ensemble showed what could be done by acute listening and inter-fertilizing musical clasp. And how remarkable the strength of ensemble and consistency of intonation in Bridlington String Group's vast band of standing fiddlers, playing a reel, a *Gymnopédie* and *Charmaine* with all the colour and sense of community of the best Strathgry Society. Stoke Damerel's "Music Machine" from Plymouth, in its delicately judged piano leadership from Bill Moyle, revealed a sense of

light-handed wit and sophistication astonishing in nine- to 11-year-olds. This class always produces some outstanding staged events. This year Rosemary Fleet's Hastings Junior Early Music Group with their poised, sensitive and enrichingly authentic Elizabethan airs and dances, expertly researched and choreographed, Sea Mills Junior School's (Bristol) entirely home-made *Chanticleer and Pertelote*, economic in music and mime, and St Paul's Primary Ensemble from St Leonard's with their clearly articulated, semi-dramatized international *Songs of Childhood* (another of Rosemary Fleet's imaginative works), remained indelibly ingrained in my memory.

Friday was devoted to Instrumental Ensembles, dance bands and, in the afternoon and evening, jazz. The technical standard of playing in the instrumental ensembles was high, though too often the music they had been given to play was inferior to their capabilities, either because the arrangements provided were inadequate or because, in an effort to find music suitable for the eccentric combinations on show, the directors had resorted to the output of third rate composers.

The most imaginative entry was Culls Percussion Ensemble from Aberdeen, the only entrant from Scotland, who gave a virtuoso display on an extraordinary variety of xylophones, glockenspiels and virtually everything else worth hitting. Here, as in several other groups throughout the festival, the standard of timpani playing was remarkable. In the late afternoon the dance

bands took the floor, with programmes that showed both musical individuality and a flair for showmanship. Unlike the instrumental ensembles and the brass and wind bands the following day the jazz and dance groups could be seen to regard sheer technique as only a means to an end. Moreover the absence of musical directors imposing their personality meant that the character of the musicians themselves could be clearly judged.

Perhaps the most interesting, and certainly, deservedly popular, aspects of the festival were the two workshops run by Eddie Harvey and Michael Garrick on the Friday afternoon. There was both excellent performance and visible learning progressing side by side. Perhaps this is an area of the Festival which could be expanded in future years, so that a trip to London and 20 minutes on stage is complemented with contacts and participation impossible at home.

A concert lasting four hours 20 minutes is the sort of marathon unseen since the days when Beethoven presented the premieres of his symphonies; and certainly the City of Leeds Youth Orchestra cannot have enjoyed having to wait until a quarter to eleven on Saturday night to make their first appearance.

One of the most striking features of the evening was the accomplishment of the string sections, for years the Achilles heel of youth orchestras. But from hearing Bromley Schools Chamber Orchestra or Kirkcaldy Youth Orchestra it would seem that that vulnerable spot is now well protected. Although Bromley's cellos were stretched to their limits by

some of the faster passages in Tchaikovsky's *Serenade for Strings*, the positive bowing and the faultless ensemble made this a very distinguished performance. It was good, too, to hear a string orchestra that really understood how to produce a proper tutti pianissimo. Kirkcaldy's strings, as well, produced great sensitivity when partnering Clare McFarlane, a violinist of enormous promise, in Bruch's First Violin Concerto, and Surrey County Fourth Orchestra were equally helpful to Michael Conn in the first two movements of Rodrigo's *Concerto de Aranjuez*.

Much of this was due to the fine quality of the leaders. Three of the six stood out: Bromley's Stephen Georgiadis, Bury's Caroline Ramsden, and Surrey's Helen Duffy.

Five of the six orchestras tested their ability in the standard classical repertoire, but Huddersfield Intermediate Young Orchestra transcended both their own technical limitations and a wish to include as wide a range of music-making as possible by choosing a new Concerto Grosso for Rhythm Section and Orchestra by two local teachers. This sort of "media-mixing" can misfire horribly, but the blending of the classical orchestra with saxophones, piano, bass-guitar and drum kit was skilfully managed, even if it left the traditional sections of the orchestra with too little that was sufficiently interesting into which to sink their musical teeth. In the end, despite the length of the evening, it proved that the liveliness and brilliance of our youth orchestras is not confined to a few exalted names at the National and European Community level, but percolates through every stratum of musical education.

The NFMY is sponsored by the Association of Music Industries, The TES, Commercial Union Assurance, The Electronic Organ Distributors' Association and The Schools Prom.

# Ploughing and scattering

Are you, perchance, an elderly physically-handicapped Gaelic-speaking religious Asian farmer? If so, then you know all there is to know about Sunday morning television already. If not, then it still worth a look, for like most of broadcasting's leany cut-decays, it harbours much that is interesting.

Mind you, there are puzzling moments. Why, for instance, did those characters in the Gaelic Serial (Can. 5, BBC1) keep interjecting with increasing passion the English words "party" and "Toronto"? Perhaps they have to do two weeks to justify national networking. "Right lads, that takes care of 'party' and 'Toronto'. Next week 'hosepipe' and 'Salisbury'."

Another mystery is how farmers find time to watch two agrarian programmes. Either their unremitting toil is, like their poverty, an assiduously cultivated myth or the existence of the programmes makes it possible to put down the telly as an allowable expense. Only occasionally are these programmes arcane to the point of self-parody. Farming (BBC1) for example started a couple of weeks ago with the announcement "Most of this week's programme is devoted to one of the year's big talking points - baled silage. Usually they contain points of general interest which, but fail to turn up later in general documentaries. Farming Today (ATV) has thus recently done a very telling job on baled silage. And the week after the baled silage, Farming showed us a lot of wheels and big tractors. These are called 'Low Ground Pressure Vehicles'. During the discussion there was raised the concept of the 'Zero Ground Pressure Vehicle' (What? An aeroplane of course! What did you think it was?).

The staple Sunday morning religious fare on both channels is still, despite occasional variations, a live broadcast of a church service. For me the most successful of these come from denominations and individual churches which have realized, on which have always instinctively

understood, that a good service is a well-rehearsed and finely detailed dramatic production. For this reason, mainstream Church of England services, which can promote qualities of peace and repose when you are actually there, do not come off so well on the small screen. Thus I found on consecutive weeks that the Methodist service and the Roman Catholic mass which were transmitted respectively by Granada and Anglia (Morning Worship) were more telling than the two BBC services (Sunday Worship) from Christ Church Chislewood. The Catholic mass, particularly, which looks fine both in long shot and in detailed close up, makes very good television and is always moving.

In August, ITV will broadcast for the first time its *Morning Worship* from the Islamic Mosque at Regent's Park. For more religion you have to wait until after tea, having dozed away the intervening hours of films and serials - now increasingly intruded by sport. Four years ago the Central Religious Advisory Committee took a step away from the old concept of the long simultaneous "God Slot" on both channels. There still remains, though, a period between 6.40 and 7.20 when the alternative to religion is BBC2's *News Review*. ITV has recently finished running its *Religion Progress* (Southern) of which *TV Times* very unhelpfully says "The series sets out to show that religion can be vital - and fun. This is a bit like putting 'Maths is fun' on the cover of a textbook - we all know it to be true, but to be forced into labelling the point is a species of surrender. The trouble with this programme is that despite the obvious charm and wit of Roger Royle, you are forced, continuously, to the conclusion that *Not the Nine O'Clock News* has done him already. I saw the last one of the series. It featured (Richard) Ingham, who was even more beautifully ridiculous than he usually is. As one might expect, he was reduced to blubbering. Eye by blurring out. There's an old saying

that you have to be cruel to be kind."

Spike Milligan came on at the end, however, and considerably enlivened the proceedings. He also explained how he has written to the Prince of Wales refusing to attend the Wedding unless he, Charles, gives up foxhunting. The Heir Apparent's reply seems to have been less than committal and thus Spike is so far staying away. This is a pity, because a programme next day in which Spike described the Wedding would surely be considerably better than the event itself.

Whether or not The Rev Dr Ian Paisley would subscribe to the proposition that religion can be fun, is something I can only hazard a guess about. What was plain from the second of two *Credo* (LWT) documentaries about Northern Ireland was that while his fundamentalist brand of Christianity may not appeal to all of Ulster's Protestants, his equally straightforward and unbending political stance is attracting more and more support. This programme did an excellent straight-forward job of telling the background to the baton-twirling and King Billyologizing. The previous week's programme looked at the Catholics and we were vividly shown the prohibition by the priest who has to bury a hunger striker. I believe that at long last after all these years we are beginning to take in that Northern Ireland is not a community of handful of mad bombers. *Credo* did a real service in showing us clearly, the grievous cultural cleavage between the two communities and the tragic tendency which leads more and more as time goes on. *Credo* and its BBC counterpart, *Evermore*, now off for the Summer apart from repeats, have grown in stature and continue to show the validity of the documentary which starts with a moral or religious question.

From Thursday onwards the groups put on their individual productions and Exeter with its variety of performing areas proved an ideal centre. The Ashby Youth Theatre, Leicestershire, a group always worth travelling a long way to see, filled Exeter College's Drama Studio with a sense of magical excitement based on "The Amazing World of the Reverend C. L. Dodgson" - an experience of nonsense, as they explained. This performance was worth seeing if only for its visual splendour, but to be offered thinly cut cucumber sandwiches and wobbly red jelly as well as the kind of excited participation that is hard to resist.

# Go west, young thespian

The Fifth National Festival of Youth Theatre, Exeter.  
North Devon Youth Theatres Project.

A hundred and fifty young people between the ages of 15 and 20 gathered at Exeter University last week. They spent seven days living and working together, performing the productions they had rehearsed and brought down with them from their various centres, and also forming general workshops which at the end of three days would produce a short piece watched by everyone.

Wednesday evening in Exeter University's Washington Singer Hall was an occasion charged with a special kind of excitement. The mixed groups produced improvisations on a variety of themes, though as might be expected, there was a good deal of emphasis on the sort of social and political problems that face the whole of our society today. One group devised a particularly obnoxious infant school teacher who asks her class of tines for their "news". A quiet and presumably "good" boy is chosen to speak, but when he begins to relate his bloodthirsty adventures on an imaginary bear hunt, he is told not to tell lies and asked to sit down. The tines get their own back on "Miss" in a uniquely nasty way, however.

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There was a courageous performance by the Enfield Youth Theatre of *The Memorandum* by Václav Havel, a Czech writer currently serving a prison sentence for challenging the fallibility of the Czech system. Sharon Shaffer was chillingly effective as the lecturer on "Pygmalion", compulsory official jargon which is to be learnt in order to succeed.

A Geordie group from North Tyneside gave us another view of "corruption" which had been devised by Shanon Prendergast in collaboration with the company. Other plays in this form of drama were *An Old Angle of the Ice* based on *The Two Pests*, by Torbay Youth Theatre, and *Blind Faith*, a multi-ethnic contribution from the Roseville Youth Theatre, Leeds, and *The Golden Masque of Agamemnon* by the Devon County Youth Theatre.

These Youth Theatres do not and for young people who do not want to become actors. There may be a few secret hearts throbbing with hope and ambition but on the whole these are school leavers who enjoy the opportunity they had to take part in drama and who want to improve and improve their skills. On the whole they do not join established amateur theatre groups for a variety of reasons. Youth Theatre gives them the opportunity to get away from and involved with a wide variety of people. It is surely not too far from the truth to say that the street is essentially what life itself ought to be about.

Before the Festival proper began those of us who went to Exeter School, Exeter were treated to an hour and a half of Arthurian legend from the Youth Theatre Project, Leicestershire, a group always worth travelling a long way to see, filled Exeter College's Drama Studio with a sense of magical excitement based on "The Amazing World of the Reverend C. L. Dodgson" - an experience of nonsense, as they explained. This performance was worth seeing if only for its visual splendour, but to be offered thinly cut cucumber sandwiches and wobbly red jelly as well as the kind of excited participation that is hard to resist.

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We moan and grumble about the modern age we live in, but at no time has the LOUSE taken such a beating and been so little of a nuisance. For centuries, if not indeed millennia, people have been scratching and cursing this "two sleekit, cowerin, timor-ous beastie". No, sorry, that was a MOUSE. Burns called a louse, "Ye ugly, creepin, blasted wonner", and remarked on its impudence. There is a lingo connexion between the names of the two beasts, as we shall see.

In the Scottish connexion, it was probably the louse, not German mustard gas, that abolished the kilt in the First World War. There are stories of Jocks sitting up all night, picking nits (nit-picking) from the plaits of their morning. The louse was also probably the reason for the traditional army short-back-and-sides, or crew-cut. (Am I hurting you? No, sergeant. I should be standing on your BACK HAIR!)

Anyway, the louse certainly came

into the language. A louse-ladder was once a name for a stitch broken in a stocking, and so is no doubt the origin of the modern ladder. A louse-walk was a parding in the hair, and a louse-bag was a black bag worn to the hair or wig. To skin a louse (for the sake of its pelt) was to be very mean. He'll never louse his own grey head meant that he would not live long. A louse-trap was a fine-toothed comb, the use for which seems evident; while the adjective lousy has been in use for centuries, as a term of contempt or disgust.

The derogatory *nit*, meaning someone stupid, has also been around for a long time. However, it is likely to be an abbreviation of the lovely word *nitwit*, a Germanic construction meaning not knowing. "Ich weiss nicht."

This does not rule out the possibility of a reinforcement by the lousening, or verminous nit. Words become commonly used, sometimes, because of their associations and not merely because of their origins.

The evolutionary and linguistic success of the verminous nit is proved by the presence of its name (see Dr Onions) in at least 12 languages, ranging from Indo-European to Albanian. I said that there was a lingo connexion between *mouse* and *louse*, to both of which creatures Robert Burns addressed himself. It is to be found in their plurals, *mice* and *lice*. This is the old German Umlaut; you know, these two funny dots they put over some letters. But I'm not going into that, now.

W. S. Brownlie

# Skooled in Sheffield

Many influences, from Kafka through Pirandello to Stanley Milgram, could be suggested for David Sheehy's new play *Skooled*, at the Sheffield Crucible Studio Theatre though within the sophisticated devices it employs there lies a common core of English political naturalism.

In the Britain of 1990 three actors are hired to help with a research project. While outside shells explode and armies march, they are dressed in uniform and subjected to lessons by a series of teachers, scatterbrained, sentimental and sinister. Mr Sheehy, Radio Sheffield's director of educational programmes, presents his teachers as people fearful of reality and indulging their various personalities without thought for their pupils' future. Or does he? Because each character in the play is also playing a role it is hard to pin down viewpoints to people. Yet there is a loss of dramatic tension because the worthy and much repeated sentiment that children need preparing for employment, is itself never challenged as a limiting idea.

However, Nigel Bennet, playing all six teachers across both sexes and a caretaker for good measure, provides plenty of chance for the laughter of recognition from the school groups for whom performances are scheduled. Rex Doyle's production keeps the pace steady, the other performances are amiable, and the set functional.

Timothy Ramsden

# End of term vaudeville

Present-day electioneering, at Warrington or anywhere else, has nothing to compare with the goings-on at Etonswill 150 years ago. Bibulous Blues and baron-of-beef Buffs, pundits, promises and humbug, Etonswill had them all everything in fact except a State Democracy.

The vitality and Georgian humour of The Etonswill Election as encountered by the Pickwick Club is the subject of a new one-act opera by Adrian Court (libretto by Johanna Platt). Commissioned by the South-end Boys Choir, it was given an impressive premiere production by Norton Knatchbull School, Ashford, last week.

Intended as a companion-piece to Benjamin Britten's vaudeville opera *The Golden Vanity*, some of its spare scoring (like *The Golden Vanity* for one piano) was aptly reminiscent of Britten, notably the taxing Prologue. A part for Peter Penn this coming dizzily in the high tenor range but ably undertaken by Jonathan Jarvis

as Mr Pott, Editor of the *Etonswill Gazette*.

Director and conductor Kenneth Hall drew consistently good performances too from his other principals, candidates, agents, tradesmen and innkeepers; while a chorus of Floating Voters filled in the Dickensian bubble, eating and swilling lustily.

Floating voters? Right from the start (and despite an opening disclaimer from Mr Cruff) topical parallels kept appearing. "The eyes of the world are on our ancient borough", sang the Editor of what could have been the *Warrington Gazette*. Later, in an effective canon the rival candidates (Jason Home-wood and Alan Lavender) elaborately outlined their identical policies. Shirley Roy, where were you?

Elections too played their part in *Rodeo*, a new play with music presented by Baynes Park High School. Cloned down on the hustings "Ronnie Ransom, a famous United States President" flashed back into a

# Toil and trouble

Superstition or not, there's something uncanny about that Scottish Play - the mere quotation of which is guaranteed to bring clouds of disaster in its wake. Jeremy James Taylor's *Witches* almost never took place last Friday night at Tiffin School, Kingston-upon-Thames, when two trombones and a saxophone had their rail passage blocked by the nationwide drama.

Visually, the show begins like a clip from Edmund Kean's *Macbeth* - all trilling pipes and bubbling cauldrons - with a score from Hector Berlioz. So when we discover that some of the broomsticks have got Dutch Elm Disease and the treadless travel by Hoover or Carpet Sweeper, the shock of surprise is one of relief.

The *Witches of Peudle* were executed in the year 1612. For no very good reason the authors have chosen to bring them back to life around 1930. Which means Art Deco and hideous lems and pinks for a scene on a jet-black beach, where the spastic postcard humour that dominates fully comes into its own. If you can stomach this level of humour

"(Give us a flash with your next exposure)" and the fact that more than half the cast are dragged up to look like pantomime dames, then it must be admitted that sheer professional gloss in sets and costume and music (Jane Martin, Bill Tidy and David Nield respectively) goes a long way towards counteracting a rather weak plot and some raucous performances.

Hags that do tangos to Northern Dance Orchestras work in a curious offbeat way. Elsewhere Leon Garfield's Dickensian tales of the goings on in Georgian London are treated to music which covers a span from late 1950s to Andrew Lloyd Webber, - a baroque concoction by James Drew-Evans in *The Dumbeake* presented at King Alfred's School, Hamstead, North London.

Garfield's Apprentices always seem to be made for one-act plays. What of course gets lost is the voice of the master - and I'm not too sure about the wisdom of spinning it into two hours. *Dumbeake* is the tale of an upstart apothecary apprentice and his free thinking, free-drinking mas-

kaleidoscope of his old films. With a cast of cowboys, Indians, homesteaders and a drawing angel called Wayne Johnstone, this was the archetypal American Dream; shaking, not stirring, politics, current affairs, cowboys and Indians, Hollywood and hoe-downs into a lively entertainment. Indians died, the smell of cordite filled the air and shots of bourbon (out of a time-warped Teachers bottle) helped everything down.

Bill Crow's script betrayed a mis-spent youth of Saturday matinees as well as a neat ear for irony as an avenging angel and the bow-legged Wayne hit the trail to protect Our Hero. And if one or two redskins bit the dust along the Yellow Brick Road (they did) well, that's the way it was, pardner. Linked together by neatly-written songs and a talented Kevin Sargent doubling the roles of rodeo proprietor and harassed TV reporter, this ambitious all-male show would not have disgraced the London or Edinburgh Fringe.

Hugh David

ter. Superstition, however, gets the better of them both; they go down before Dumbeake and tried true love. This was an eminently easy-going comedy, although the production lacked the sparkle of the score. Magnus Hastings sang Parrot the apprentice with considerable style and charm; the settings were neat and highspots came when the mixture of styles was most deliberately fluid. One only wishes that the staging could have contained the energy and verve of the music.

Peter Fanning

Impressions of Paris seen through the eyes of its painters  
This delightful 25-minute film captures the charm and beauty of romantic Paris through the eyes of its painters.  
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## books



GBS at his home at Ayot St. Lawrence, Hertfordshire

## Shaw and sunlight

Jan Stephens

Shaw's Music. Edited by Dan H. Laurence. The Bodley Head. Three volumes, £15 each. Bernard Shaw, a reassessment. By Colin Wilson. Macmillan £10 and £3.95. Bernard Shaw and the Actresses, a biography. By Margot Peters. Columbus Books £8.95.

To enjoy Shaw always seems to me as natural as enjoying sunlight. Indeed, to turn again to almost any of his writings is an infallible antidote to low spirits. Yet the other day I came across a man who merely found him irritating. This used to be the ordinary nineteenth-century reaction to Shaw's teasing. To meet it in 1981 is rather shocking, though no doubt it is also a tribute to the vitality of the text.

The complete music criticism, in nearly 3,000 stimulating and carefully edited pages, includes much that was omitted from the original collections. The additions, mainly from the early period, give one glimpses of Shaw's development. It is rather endearing

to see how at first he lays about him, like any other talented youth in his twenties, though he is already more knowledgeable than most. But his is the ferocity of the genuine young enthusiast and not yet the deliberately provocative programme of self-advertisement. As early as 1877 he is deploring the "overweight" of a modern orchestra applied to Mozart and the cutting of Bach to suit the taste of the age. Having been brought up to value Vandevelde Lee's sensible method of voice production, he is quick to perceive the damage inflicted by less enlightened systems and does not hesitate to point it out. Experiments do not offend him; he speaks approvingly of a quintet by Wagner as composer is one of his heroes; Wagner as conductor "must be very unsatisfactory to an orchestra unused to his peculiarities." This is still the writing of a clever youth. The first hint of the Shaw to be occurs in a notice of Rossini's *Oello* when he remarks that "M. Faure's lingo was generally understood to be a deeply-studied conception. Possibly it was, for there was no indication of it on the surface." And before long

young Shaw will be raising the subject of state aid for music and proposing the establishment of a first-rate permanent English orchestra. Although Shaw anticipated many of our likes and dislikes in music he is sometimes criticized for exaggerating the faults of his victims. It is said, for instance, that the English music of the time was not always as bad as he makes out. In other words, he elected to be evangel rather than judge, just as he continued to be when he went on to write theatre criticism. His achievement was to be lucid, lively and vivid to a degree unequalled in any other critic. Once he has mastered his craft he is a great one for pretended rages but never loses his temper, which is to say that he never commits the unforgivable sin in criticism. The pieces still have an immediacy often denied to last week's or even yesterday morning's reviews.

Shaw has been scolded for his theatre criticism too, yet this has left the same indelible marks. Goodness only knows when last I read his wickedly amusing analysis of *A Veteran of Waterloo*, but I am convinced that just as did Irving obtain his effects. And remember that in Shaw what strikes the solemn reader as malice is really the expression of regret that enviable talent was being thrown away on trumpery.

Mr Colin Wilson is another admirer of Shaw who, like me, first came upon him as a schoolboy. But whereas for me the works are all-sufficing, Mr Wilson has also the normal curiosity about their author. This is perhaps because he is concerned to defend Shaw against his detractors, while it never occurred to me that Shaw had any. There I have apparently been quite wrong. No less a person than the American intellectual who reckoned *Hamlet* an artistic failure was also dissatisfied with Shaw, calling him "dramatically precocious and poetically less than immortal." T. S. Eliot wrote at Tennyson felt about Browning: "I have no doubt he is a great genius, but I can't read him." This sort of thing has worried Mr Wilson, so that his sensible, level-headed biography is constantly on the alert to justify his subject, which of course he does without difficulty.

He makes the important point that it was Shaw's discovery of economics

that enabled him to develop his drama. He also recognizes how well Shaw's plays read - often making a better impression than when acted, since the stage directions, frequently ignored in the theatre, do much more than set the scene: they explain the characters in terms that go far beyond mere aids to the actors. To the nonage and the novels he gives unusual attention, for he finds in them the reflection of Shaw's own personality at the time: essentially shy and uncertain of himself. Shaw's private life (if anything about this dedicated publicist can properly be called private) is also dealt with fully and sympathetically. Margot Peters studies it in such detail, however, very nearly from day to day, that perhaps we should reserve the story for her.

In the stage history of the plays Mr Wilson outdoes her; she is concerned with it only so far as it affects her actresses. From her we should never have guessed, for instance, just how successful was the first performance of *John Bull's Other Island* at the Court Theatre in 1904. "What happened," Mr Wilson explains, "was that a new public discovered Shaw - the upper-class intelligent public, that had never bothered with Stage Society performances."

Success was enormous and instantaneous. The Prime Minister, Mr Balfour, went to see it four times, taking various other political celebrities with him. And the ultimate seal of success was set upon the play - and upon Shaw - when in March 1905 King Edward VII commanded a performance of the play, and laughed so heartily that he broke the chair he was sitting on." Shaw was out of the coterie theatre at last.

Bernard Shaw and the Actresses will be an eye-opener to those who know Shaw only by his works. Here is Shaw the born flirt, now advancing, now retreating, now positively fleeing from the Superman he has awakened in a succession of talented and pretty women. These explain most of the women in the plays. Shaw, it is evident, never worried of playing with summer lightning. His letters are not those of a natural amorist. For all his professed ardour he had no experience of actual sex until he was 29, and then it was with Jenny Patterson, a rich widow who was a friend of his mother's and 15 years his senior. But sex itself he was

inclined to dodge. As the biographer tactfully puts it, he lacked "genetic drive." Shaw in fact was in love with the idea of love. He might doubt himself that it was sometimes more than that, but the real pleasure was in exchanging love letters. "They're not as good as I make them sound," Mrs Patrick Campbell told James Laver complacently when he was sent to Paris with the task of obtaining the Shaw correspondence for an English publisher and had to be content with listening to extracts. Her remark was just not true. As Margot Peters observes, "For the type of woman who preferred gallantry to a man instead of aggression, however, words instead of deeds, intelligence rather than physicality, playfulness rather than stolidity, Shaw was irresistible."

Margot Peters' actresses - Jane Achurch, Florence Farr, Elizabeth Robins (an earnest young American who totally misunderstood Shaw and consequently disliked him intensely), Ellen Terry, Lena Ashwell, Lida McCarthy (Granville Barker's first wife), Mrs Patrick Campbell - and whole contributed more to the actors than they did to any one performance. When it came to appearing in Shaw, the old fit would generally break out in them; they vainly tried to reconcile the New Drama with the acting style which they had been trained in, for all their talk, had they really faith enough? It says volumes for Shaw's patience and kindness that he tolerated their deficiencies as long as he did. Janet Achurch and her husband and acting partner Charles Harrington were always difficulties, again and again of their own making; in her case it was dait and, later on, morphia besides. Mrs Ellen Terry, warmest-hearted and most genuine of them all, and looking to find a good part after theatrical nonentities that was all the Lyceum could offer her, was indeed by her loyalty to Irving. Who at length she was free to use in Shaw's plays - he wrote the part of Lady Cicely in *Captain Brassbound's Conversion* for her - her falling illness, especially her inability to remember lines, was not exactly helpful. But this is only to touch the surface of all that can be found in Margot Peters' informative and scrupulously documented study.

## Wonder-ful

Randall Jarrell: *The Complete Poems*. Faber £5.50, 571 11748 1.

The appearance of Randall Jarrell's entire poetic oeuvre in paperback - a whopping volume of more than 30 large format pages - is thoroughly good news. Between 1934 and the publication of his last poems in 1965, Jarrell established himself in the minds of many as the finest poet of his generation: the balladist of his highly approachable work as of an unerring yet tender eye for the man weakness, subtle intelligence, wit, a love of storytelling, the sense of a sense of wonder and awe, all, sheer openness to the experience of life.

Jarrell is so aware of being alive, and yet so conscious that the precious moment is only a moment, that one of the best of his celebrations is to make one want to weep, or else to marvel at the apparent inevitability of the "dullness of life" being "well water / Pumped from an old well at the bottom of the world." For most of the time, Jarrell, drawing up the water and whole business of living is humdrum and a chore:

And yet sometimes  
The wheel turns of its own weight,  
Pump pumps over your sweating  
Water, cold, so cold you cup your  
And gulp from them the dullness  
of life.

Kevin Crossley-Holland

Bernard Denvir

## Sumptuous, splendid, exquisite, superb . . .

Royal Heritage. By J. H. Plumb and Huw Weldon. BBC Publications £8.50 563 1797 4.

Perhaps the most illuminating section of this book - a paperback version of the one first published in 1977 - is the account by Michael Gill, the producer of the BBC television series on which it is based, which took a team of 30 two years to make. In it he describes the usual process involved. "As a result of our round table discussions, the director has drawn up a short running order of the film; places and paintings and objects on one side of the page, progression of ideas on the other. Then Jack Plumb writes an essay, embodying all this and much more. Using it as the backbone, Huw Weldon writes the script; he will speak on location at many different times and places. This director puts beside it his camera shots, making such amendments as he deems to be justified and pruned by many hands."

*Royal Heritage* therefore must be the essays which Jack wrote, with possible additions by Huw. One thing is certain, just as the avuncular, deferential Weldon is: no Rowan Atkinson, so the obsequious Plumb is no Braudel, no Strachey. There is not a critical, not an astute remark to be detected in this almost hagiographical account of royal builders and collectors. The note struck right from the beginning, with the self-evident statement that without the gracious permission of Her Majesty the Queen the book could not possibly have been written. There is deep gratitude expressed to

the Queen Mother, and to Sir Oliver Millar whose "impeccable scholarship and sensitivity of understanding, saved the authors from many errors of detail", and the book proper opens with the claim - which surely does less than justice to the Medici, the Hapsburgs, the Bourbons, the Papacy and the Romanoffs - that "the royal treasures of the British monarchy are of an unparalleled magnificence and variety."

This initial exercise in hyperbole is maintained with relentless zeal for the next 350 pages, each of which is studied with epithets such as sumptuous, splendid, magnificent, exquisite, outstanding, superb, incomparable. Even the word "great", which appears about twice on every page seems anaemic against such a background of laudatory tortuosity. Knights of the Garter are "men of outstanding intelligence in the country's life." The Field of Cloth of Gold was "the greatest of all Renaissance spectacles" - a statement which Francis Yates would find surprising.

Individual royal personages are treated as though it was they who created the works of art with which they have been connected. "The Great Hall of Hampton Court is entirely Henry's work," Princess Augustus "was responsible for the ravishing series of portraits by the Liotard of her nine children." No occasion for praise of a king or queen is let slip. George II and George IV may have been intelligent, but that is hardly proven by the fact that they were taught Greek, Latin and French. The Prince Regent may have been sensitive enough, but how do we know that

"he wept with deep and genuine emotion" when his father became demented? From what we hear about him, he was ready to shed tears with all the facility of an alcoholic. And it is a grievous underestimation of a lot of people to claim that "more than his ministers, far more than his people, George IV had an intuitive sense of the greatness of events." Nor is it easy to see why the silhouettes which his otherwise uncreative great-grandfather cut out are "beautiful and complex" since they have all been lost.

Inevitably a book of this nature involves more history than art appreciation, and in this context Professor Plumb practises an approach which seems to lie somewhere between that of Cawthra and that of A. L. Rowse. Scholars and monks are "dedicated", while kings and queens are "dedicated to the nation's life". The Glassall and Albert, at the Shire of Althwa, is not a sadistic but often children; for the royal family loves its privacy, as much as Queen Victoria did, but for different reasons. Which, one wonders.

Indeed instead of providing us with a rather oversimplified history of England, Professor Plumb might well have proffered more details about the mechanics of royal patronage, and given us more information about the dealers, agents, and customers who had almost as much to do with these collections as their royal masters. Instead of all that familiar stuff about the Oxford Parliament, about the Duke of Edinburgh, about the Queen's Mother, and the rest, now in a more interesting and entertaining way, it would have been to have heard something

about Daniel Nys, Nicholas Lanier, Endymion Porter, Dudley Carleton, and all the others who were engaged, often in devious fashion, in building up the Stuart collection. How useful to have been able to read more about the influence of Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel, and of George Francis Villiers, Duke of Buckingham on the tastes of the young Charles I. And why, although there are two perfunctory references to Consul Smith, is there no mention of Richard Dalton, the royal librarian who scoured Italy for pictures for George III, and had such an important influence on the formation of the royal collection?

*Royal Heritage* is lavishly illustrated, but curiously, and lamentably, the dimensions and media of the works of art are not given. Inevitably even the illustrations tell off towards the end - an indication of the diminishing interest in the arts demonstrated by post-Victorian British monarchs. After all the glowing masterpieces of the earlier centuries, it is more than a little depressing to plough through 17 snapshots of durbars' royal yachts, royal motor cars, royal shooting parties, and no less than 56 postage stamps - all reproduced in full colour. It is a pity that amongst the rather trivial acquisitions to the royal collection in recent years no room was found to illustrate one of the few positive and imaginative examples of patronage, the murals in Buckingham Palace commissioned by the Duke of Edinburgh from Feliks Topolski - the last flicker of a tradition which this book makes it impossible for us to underate.

Bernard Denvir

Kevin Crossley-Holland

extra

Reading  
Through a child's eyes?

John Bald reappraises Frank Smith

Frank Smith's work on reading has attracted considerable attention, both from teachers and from the organizers of training courses. It is broad in scope and highly controversial. His books and essays contain a number of distinct variations, both in emphasis and in subject-matter. These cannot always be explained in terms of the development of his ideas over a period of time, and make him a difficult author to read. This article is an attempt to assess some of the implications of Frank Smith's work for the teaching of reading.

At its best, his writing is carefully thought-out and very clearly expressed. Early in *Understanding Reading* (Holt Rinehart & Winston, 1971), for example, he says that:

"A number of distinctions are made in this book that are not always clearly observed in discussions of reading. The first distinction is between learning to read and proficient reading, or fluent reading as it will be termed. The beginning reader has to acquire special skills that will be of very little use to him once he develops reading fluency."

This is an important point which is still commonly over-looked.

Similar care is shown in this book in discussing the implications of his work for the classroom. He says that he does not claim to be a teacher of children and that he would, therefore, "not presume to assert that a particular instructional method is superior to any other." Such restraint is apparent in much of Frank Smith's work and may come as a surprise after the accounts given of it by his more enthusiastic supporters.

His work on phonics fits clearly into this pattern. He points out that there is no exact correspondence between the way words are written and the way in which they are spoken. He cites research which suggests that 160 rules and 45 exceptions are the rest in the most basic phonics system, and argues that fluent readers do not decode from print. Instead, they make use of what they know already to make sense of what they are reading.

Phonic instruction, therefore, has a limited place in the scheme of things. It can "provide a clue to the sound (or name) of a configuration being examined", but should not prevent the reader from using other means at his disposal to establish meaning. The position is stated with some finality in *Reading* (Cambridge University Press, 1978):

## Shaping up

Shapes and Words  
By Gwen Clemens  
Macmillan £7.95

*Shapes and Words* is a set of language development materials which are intended to encourage young children to look, listen, talk and write. It has 12 full colour pictures, each on a different theme (At the Airport, The Sea Shore, Camping, Shopping, etc), accompanied by black and white outline pictures, with relevant vocabulary, and separate sheets of additional vocabulary to expand each theme. The materials are packed in a cardboard wallet which could have been larger to aid removal/replacement of the various sheets.

The main pictures are intended to provide the stimulus for oral discussion, and the outline illustrations and word lists to "give children practice in word recognition and to help with their own free writing". The pictures show situations and environments with which many children will be familiar, so they provide a realistic framework for language work. John Dyke's illustrations contain much detail but his style is not one which will appeal to everyone - particularly his depiction of some of the human figures.

The 42 x 30 cm pictures are printed on paper, and would presumably need to be mounted on card if they were to survive much classroom handling. Their size limits their use to a small group of children only, but this is desirable if each child is to

Smith, is a rich source of reading matter for children.

No definition of science could admit the above. It is a collection of observations with a conclusion tacked on. It is also utter nonsense. The language of advertising which dominates the street and the supermarket is stark, disconnected and consists for the most part of single words, slogans and what are termed "logos". Frank Smith's opinion of disconnected word recognition is well known. What makes these so suddenly acceptable? There is, moreover, so much supporting information on this point that it is highly questionable that it does much in itself to convey meaning. It is generally part of the product, and its message is not "think", but "buy". If this were really a better environment for reading than school, then perhaps the truants who spend most of their time in it would be better readers. As it is, its disjointed and self-serving world is more barren, shallow and intellectually destructive than the most mechanistic approach in school could ever be.

A paradox in Frank Smith's writing is that at times it is his very clarity that makes his work difficult to read. He is prone to the kind of sentence which sums up a large and complex area in a simple maxim. Such statements as "We learn to read by reading", or "Children learn phonics through reading, they do not learn reading through phonics" can thus readily be presented as if they are all that is to be said, even when their substance is contradicted elsewhere in Frank Smith's own work. The reader must have his wits about him.

Frank Smith's main contribution, however, and one which runs with some consistency throughout his work, is to concentrate our attention on the child learning rather than the teacher teaching. Children do indeed need to do far more reading than at present, and there is much evidence to show that many schools still give them too few opportunities to read. In secondary schools particularly, the benefit of private reading is still not widely recognized and we need to give it the same attention that is beginning to be paid to oral work.

The value of Frank Smith's writing is nevertheless diminished by his lack of discipline, and his work needs to be considered critically. Treated with care, he can extend our knowledge of reading and thus help us to improve our teaching. Swallowed whole, he is dangerous.

There is even print in the advertisements on television. This, says Frank

The picture continues outside the store: "Few children are completely unaware of telephone directories and catalogues, of magazines and newspapers with their sports pages, entertainment guides and comic strips. Out in the street there are traffic signs, store fronts, advertising, menus, mail boxes, posters, hoardings and washroom doors labelled with very significant print."

There is even print in the advertisements on television. This, says Frank

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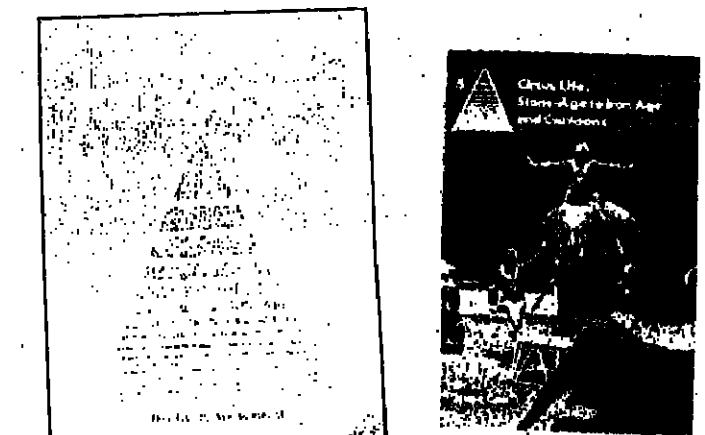
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Wendy Body



# Janet and John and Jean-Paul Sartre

Ron Deadman makes a case for 'Language Experience'

Describing the difficulties faced by his reception class teacher, who has to cope with many non-English-speaking children as well as a number of lively young Cockneys, an East End head was heard complaining recently (to *The Daily Mail*) that all the poor girl could do in the circumstances was to draw a picture of a cat on the board and write the letters C.A.T. underneath it. "It's a slow and laborious way of building up a vocabulary," he said, "for the only English words many of her class will hear and speak are during the lesson."

Did this head but know it - and many teachers would say that it would be better if he *did* know it - chalking a cat on the board and drawing another kind of picture underneath it (a picture called a 'word') is not the last desperate measure it seems; rather it is the first step in a methodical and imaginative system which will survive all the battles fought on behalf of teaching reading by "Phonics" and "Look and Say."

Tracking down the first teacher to use a picture to transmit a message would need a time machine; in the beginning was not the word, but a picture of the word, drawn by a wolf-skin-clad communicator on the walls of a cave.

The method itself is known as "Language Experience" and more enthusiasts will be found in the United States than in Britain, where possibly seven maths and science teachers out of ten would think you meant linking speech to creative writing. And they would be right too (as the Bullock Committee was right) in the long run, for language experience practitioners would argue - try to stop them at your peril at an American Reading conference - that the best way to develop fluency in all aspects of written English is to begin as soon as a child can handle a pencil or a crayon.

The youngster draws his picture and then writes, or has written for him, his "other picture" which he can then say, and which the adult can hear him say. Thus, listening, speaking, writing and reading become linked in his mind, for all time, as crucial parts of a communication system, not as isolated skills. Writing, as a skill set apart from others,

presents formidable difficulties for many children. Vygotsky and other researchers point out that youngsters can see no reason for writing at all. Why should they? They can communicate far more easily by voice. Who needs a pen?

Certainly words in isolation, for many children, look more like deliberately-erected stumbling blocks than attempts to communicate in the mother tongue. William Saroyan, one of his many autobiographical short stories, describes his first day at school. His kindergarten teacher baffled him by writing three strange shapes on the board: C-A-T. "That," she said, "is cat." She was crazy, Saroyan decided. A cat - his cat especially - was all black fur and green eyes. What were these people trying to do to him?

American teachers today - and many teachers of retarded readers in this country - would encourage the use of sketchbooks, in which the words of the caption for a picture (written by the pupil) act as a sort of "code". Reading the words becomes in turn a kind of "decoding" game.

And, of course, not only teachers and not only in school. The reason why many children arrive at school already able to read fluently while others in the class are bemused from the start is because their parents have played the communications game with them, listening to questions thoughtfully, generally providing the right word at the right time and often writing it underneath a picture so that it can be copied, then "said". Saying what the two different kinds of picture mean is what we call reading, and this way of treating a "subject" is fun. Black shapes on a white page have become demythologised; it's simply another way of speaking and listening.

Mothers and fathers who take the trouble to make out word-cards which demonstrate, for example, that the door or the table or chair can be seen "in another way" are in fact doing far more good than all the experts who communicate with other experts in a highly specialised language in which terms like *phonemes*, *morphemes* and *digraphs* play an important part.

Despite the healthy minority of American teachers who favour the

delightful simplicity of the language experience method (there are cynics who point out that you don't need to buy books to use it and that's why it's not an official method), the majority, with reading on the timetable for all ages in the elementary school, a compulsory feature, can be trusted to go into the subject with near-Tautonic thoroughness. As an exchange teacher, working in a school in Connecticut way back in the sixties, I was mystified by an invitation (unrefusable) to attend a lecture on *The Schwa*. It wasn't, disappointingly, a newly-discovered monster from Lake Michigan; it was simply the unaccented syllable in *b'hana*, or, if you're Richie Benaud, *cricket*. The debate today ranges (and rages) far beyond the reach of *The Schwa*, and its terms are intellectualized to the point where Phonics and 'Look and Say' have become descriptive relics, or at least re-classified (by Professor Chall in *Learning to Read; the Great Debate*) under the headings "Code Emphasis" and "Meaning Emphasis". Experts like Kenneth Goodman criticize the code-emphasis instructional programmes because they "begin with bits and pieces abstracted from language" (like letters). Such systems, he says, make learning to read harder "because it isn't language any more". He stresses that most school beginners are already in possession of powerful resources - language competence and an ability to go on learning that language. The name of Chomsky is often invoked in this context, and other opponents of code emphasis have described the method as "a vague but laudable concept" and "a Spartan deprivation of outside help in word identification."

Code emphasis enthusiasts, on the other hand, firmly believe that "cognitive confusion" is the chief symptom of reading disability and that the aim of the teacher of reading must be directed towards developing cognitive clarity. British researchers like Vernon, Reid and Downing are held in great esteem all over the world on this subject, and rightly so. Reid found in a study of five-year-old Scottish children that while teachers were happily using words like *letter*, *sound*, *reading* and *words* in order to

ask questions, the youngsters themselves often didn't know what the word *letter* meant, let alone the word *word*.

Cognitive confusion, a phrase first used by Professor Vernon in *Backwardness in Reading* in 1957, is surely the only way to describe the bafflement faced by the child who hears, on entering school, what, after all, are technical terms like *letter* and *sentence*. Professor Downing has used the following passage to illustrate the confusion in the mind of an individual "who is not fully initiated into the mysteries of the language instruction register". Only Edward Lear and Monty Python would get top marks for comprehension.

"I'm going to save some mivvirs. See these mivvirs. Their names are now and orsh. They say haagh. Who knows a zasp with the tuaf haagh in it?"

Downing translates thus: "I'm going to write some letters. Their names are sea and ditch. They say haagh (as in Loch). Who knows a word with the sound haagh in it?"

Firmly on the side of those who view reading as a skill which can and must be developed, Downing points to the work of the Russians, whose tiny tots use coloured counters to distinguish between vowels and consonants before they see written words, and to American skill-researchers Fitts and Posner, who assert that there are three phases of development in reading. In the cognitive phase, they say, the child attends closely to the functions and techniques which are necessary; next comes the "learning work" phase in which the skill is practised until mastery is gradually achieved. The third is the "overlearning phase" - when the learner practises beyond mastery until "automaticity" is achieved.

"Automaticity" isn't a word that trips lightly off the tongue. Nor is another, which John Downing uses to deflate the notion (which trips too easily off the tongues of certain comprehensive school critics) of "illiteracy". Most of the children who have been labelled illiterate, says Downing, are in reality *exliterate*. They are youngsters who have got by on minimum standards and have then allowed their skill to deteriorate even more on leaving school. In other words, they can read, but they

haven't gone on practising reading. For them, the cat sat on the mat at infant level, and there it is today.

Laymen in this field are rather like people who can hop on a bike and pedal off without worrying too much about how they manage to stay upright. Able to read themselves, they become understandably impatient of explanations of why and how they are able to cope with the printed word.

Some take a detached view of "Look and Say" methods, arguing that there's too much saying - or guessing - and not enough looking. On the other hand, the phonics system lays itself open to the charge of aridity. "Barking at print," teachers called it twenty years ago, but today it seems to be enjoying a new lease of life. It is, after all, methodical, and who, in these non-trendy Boysonian days, will own up to not liking method?

Language experience enthusiasts will not object too strenuously to Look and Say reading schemes as used as well as workbooks - especially if some of the words have been actually experienced first. And they would see no reason why certain words in a Look and Say text should not be selected for analysis and used for "word-attack" practice.

The major snag in teaching by phonics alone may be that some people become infatuated with them, failing to understand that there comes a time when children must be encouraged to move out into the exciting world of real books.

Sartre says, in *L'Imaginaire*, that it is necessary for us not only to be able to realize, but to be able to "irrealize" too. We shall never read *War and Peace* (or for that matter Janet and John) until we irrealize, a deliberately forget, that the first letter of the first word is a shape made up of hundreds of tiny dots.

There are cynics who would argue that many phonics enthusiasts find it extremely difficult to forget, intentionally, that *See Eh Tee* simply add up to a consonant, a vowel and a consonant. They may sound like CAT, but they don't make the kind of picture William Saroyan (unknowingly) allowed their skill to deteriorate even more on leaving school. In other words, they can read, but they

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## Reading Reader Texts

Liz Heron on one school's project to introduce reading development across the curriculum

Six years after the Bullock Committee's recommendations in *A Language for Life* you might be hard put to notice any long term impact in the majority of schools. Merrill Hamner, head of the remedial department at Hammersmith County School in ILBA, feels that one reason for this has been the vagueness of the concept: "a policy for language across the curriculum". What it demanded was no simple, immediate response, but for schools to take a searching look at curriculum issues, and to put some strenuous effort into developing a framework for change.

Merrill Hamner's own concern with reading and language difficulties moved her to take some positive steps in this direction. Two years ago she approached the head at her school with a proposal to run a school based, in-service course on reading development across the curriculum and across the ability range. After two successful runs, and numerous requests for a third go next year, there is evidence of sustained interest on the part of staff. "The commitment was a heavy one," she says. "Reading Reader Texts" consisted of ten weekly one and a half hour sessions after school. It aimed to develop a general understanding of the reading process, to see how children learn to read, to explore ways of developing reading

ability in the classroom, and to examine texts in relation to the pupils. Course members were presented with an extensive bibliography.

Drawing on the work of Frank Smith, the first session considered the reading process in psycholinguistic terms, examining how the brain processes visual information, and emphasizing the importance of the meaning that the reader brings to his or her understanding of the text.

One session concentrated on miscue analysis, and the importance of hearing children read aloud. Other sessions explored methods to encourage reading for learning, and assessment of texts for levels of reading difficulty. There was also critical scrutiny of some currently used texts across the subject range, and a consideration of alternatives. Issues of racism, sexism and class, and how these are constructed within specific texts, were discussed in the final stages.

Staff who took part were agreed on the usefulness of the course structure, and its effectiveness in making them view their own work in a fresh light. As David Spencer, head of English, said: "It taught me to look again at books and methods I thought had been successful. Here, teachers were put in the position of pupils. This strategy achieved maximum active involvement and had the virtue of highlighting the pitfalls

and inadequacies of conventionally trusted techniques.

Course members worked in pairs, for example, on "group cloze" and "group sequencing" (reordering a passage divided into sections in random order). It became clear that a logical and "correct" order could be built up with only a superficial understanding of the text. Similarly, logical answers could be given to a series of comprehension questions on a passage that had been rendered incomprehensible through a consistent substitution of nonsense words. These and other exercises demonstrated how accuracy could be achieved at the expense of understanding, and underlined the crucial place of both teacher intervention and of more probing, discussion-based work.

Practical work made unfamiliar shifts of theory more accessible, displacing assumptions that rested on a foundation of teacher training acquired in some cases ten or twenty years ago, and overtaken by recent work on language and reading.

Beyond their more obvious applications in literacy-grounded subjects there was also scope for the newly learned approaches elsewhere. The home economics department experimented successfully with simple flow diagrams and instructions for cooking plans, rather than simply using conventional recipe layouts. In

health education, books were tested for suitability and found to be inappropriate for their intended age range. One maths teacher was prompted to rethink how she presented lessons.

The course had a significant effect on the science department, showing that many science texts were written in a language that obscured rather than illuminated the concepts to be mastered. Science teacher Sue Regal felt the course was very useful. "It made me question the whole way I teach. Children don't necessarily find the science concepts difficult, but they find it difficult to express themselves about them". She has since initiated departmental discussions on changing and redesigning worksheets and other materials currently in service.

To their own surprise, many of the staff have discovered what Merrill Hamner has emphasised from the outset: that reading difficulties are not solely the problem of slow learners, but that an understanding of the reading process is invaluable in teaching across the age and ability range.

Predictably, issues of racism, sexism and class in books and other literature provoked the most heated discussions. In the first course that she ran, Merrill Hamner adopted the criteria for evaluation of racism: approach, judging acceptability,

according to certain positive or negative ways of representing ethnic minorities. Classroom work and research have convinced her that the use of such guidelines is simplistic and unproductive.

Rather than discarding certain texts and turning to "sanitized" alternatives, Ms Hamner now feels that they should be used in a critical way so as to develop the kind of analytical tools that young readers will need if they are to have an understanding of the complexities that underlie such representations; and subsequently be equipped to bring that understanding to future texts. To ignore the value of this approach is to fail to realise that any text derives meaning from its reader and its context, as well as from the intentions and ideology of its author.

The success of "Reading Reader Texts" is a convincing argument for more school-based courses. The benefits are legion. As staff at Hammersmith County pointed out, the course was one example of how the specialist expertise of particular staff members can be mediated to the advantage of others. It has also provided a meeting-point between departments, giving everyone a clearer sense of what was happening throughout the school and opening the way for more inter-departmental exchange and consultation.



# extra

## Help yourself to reading

Roz Ivanic and Ruth Lesirge discuss materials for literacy groups

Most adults have an enormous variety of reading material thrust upon them by the demands of their jobs and homes. If they have time after that, other reading arises from well-established interests, from dog-handling to astrology. The problem for adult literacy students is not what to read, but that what they need and want to read is inaccessible.

### What shall we read?

People bring with them to literacy sessions what they urgently need to read and this takes priority over any other material. Their less immediate literacy needs are not so easy to identify. Perhaps our most important role as tutors is helping people formulate and articulate these needs. Our goal is to enable people in a literacy group to propose their own subject matter for a session or term. To do this they need time to mull over together a range of subjects which they would like to delve into. This relieves tutors of the burden of choosing in isolation - at the risk of choosing something totally unsuitable - and returns control of content to its rightful owners.

This does not mean, however, that we as tutors have no specific function. One way we might be able to help is to suggest sources of information on a subject. Because we can read more quickly, we can sample many texts and then recommend a selection to the group, saying why we chose each and where it came from. It may be our function to provide multiple copies of a text, to reproduce parts in larger print, or to read it out to the group. The important thing is that we act as a result of consultation with other members of the group. In this way we acknowledge the value of the group's life experience as the best basis for learning.

The texts we'd like to use may be too dense, too long or too complicated for some students. (This is not necessarily a reflection of the students' reading weaknesses; often it is the result of poor writing.) When this is the case, the group can rewrite the text together. If people listen to a text as it is read out loud, they can often disentangle the ideas and say what it means in their own words. The tutor can be made responsible for taking down this version in written form. The contribution the tutor can make during the discussion is to highlight parts of the text which may cause confusion, and encourage the group to sort these parts out. Someone may be able to provide supplementary information, an analogy from personal experience or an expanded explanation to make the meaning clear. Complex sentences can be pulled apart and rewritten with one idea per sentence; useful headings can be added; obscure terminology can be replaced by simple words. These activities will be recognisable as similar to the ones required in English Language comprehension examinations. The difference is that they are taking place in the process of producing a simplified version of a text which will be used in subsequent classes. Another advantage of this method of working is that people do not need to deal with the meaning and decoding the print concurrently.

Once the rewrite has been completed, it can be reproduced in a form which the group can work from

the following week. Preparing the layout may involve decisions about whether to use handwriting or print, letter size, spacing between letters, words and lines, appropriate line-breaking, format for headings, use of illustrations, and the overall appearance of each page. It is not just a question of making it look good; these considerations can affect the accessibility of a text as much as the wording does. A note at the end which credits the original and says where it is to be found ensures that any student can relate the simplified version to its source at any time.

### Who publishes good materials?

Public information documents, however, ought not to need adaptation - they should be lucid and clearly laid out for everyone. Some work has been done to encourage the use of clearly written English. The Plain English Campaign has been striving to persuade organizations (including local and central government) to improve their forms, instructions and leaflets. They have published a book, *Writing Plain English* and produced guidelines under the headings: "Clear Writing" and "Design and Layout". The experience of the campaign includes working with the DHSS, the Provincial Building Society and Bradford Public Libraries.

Another source of relevant and accessible material is students' own writing. In the last few years Adult Literacy Schemes have seen it as a very important development of their work to collect and publish these. One result has been the quarterly newspaper *Write First Time*. It is produced by a collective and contains articles drafted, written and edited by students and tutors. Each issue has an overall theme or focuses on one part of the country. All the articles are broken into units of meaning to facilitate fluent reading from line to line. The length of the pieces varies, as does the size of print, to cater for a variety of needs. The paper generates a great deal of talking and writing in Adult Literacy groups: people are stimulated by the subject matter and encouraged because the articles have been written by other students.

This same enthusiasm to read and to be read has generated many other collections of students' writing. Most schemes duplicate magazines at intervals and circulate them to all their groups. Some also publish collections in book form which can be bought from bookshops or direct from the addresses given below. The significant thing about all these collections of writing is that students wrote to be read, not merely to practise their writing. They address themselves to a general reading audience, not "just" to adult literacy students and tutors.

### What About Skills?

Whichever of these materials we use, our purpose remains the same: to use reading as a means to an end - access to information - not as an end in itself. By easing the reading task, we make possible the intellectual activities that reading stimulates. Adult students already have a major reading strength: a store of knowledge on which to base predictions about overall meaning or specific words. People can capitalize on this because we are using familiar, interesting or functional subject matter. However, where people need help to read, a phrase we give it, where the meaning is lost we recap. Reading skills which need to be developed (for example, word attack skills, sight vocabulary, attention to endings) become evident during this process. After the reading we can draw students' attention to these aspects of their reading and we can decide together what would be most useful to work on. Our role as tutors is then to offer a carefully thought-out support system of activities to develop and reinforce the reading skills each student needs. There are some extremely helpful

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Please read the list on the back of this letter. We need to see the things on it to work out your benefit. If you forget to bring them, it could hold up your benefit.

MR PAUL SMITH  
32 HIGH STREET  
WESTMINSTER  
LONDON SW1

ALM E

Date:

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY  
(DO address)  
To: .....  
By: .....  
Mr John Smith  
32 HIGH STREET  
WESTMINSTER  
LONDON SW1

Your appointment is  
on WEDNESDAY 10th MARCH (Date) at 3.15 PM (Time)  
PLEASE ARRIVE AT THE OFFICE PROMPTLY AS IT MAY BE DIFFICULT TO GET IN ANOTHER APPOINTMENT THE SAME DAY IF YOU ARRIVE LATE. Do not wait to see the receptionist but go straight to the waiting room until you are called for interview at Booth number.

What you need to bring with you  
SO THAT YOUR PROPER ENTITLEMENT TO SUPPLEMENTARY BENEFIT CAN BE DETERMINED YOU MUST PROVIDE EVIDENCE ABOUT YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES. YOU SHOULD THEREFORE BRING ANY OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS YOU HAVE FOR YOURSELF, YOUR WIFE OR ANY DEPENDANTS.

Form B1 or B10 from the Unemployment Benefit Office if unemployed (unless already submitted).  
Last two wage slips.  
Letter from employer if holding a week's wages in hand.

Form A 103

(See page 103)

Please turn over

An example of how a DHSS document could be simplified. The word 'appointment' has been omitted as research showed that many people could not read it.

examples of follow-up activities in *Wages to Windscale*. This is a collection of worksheets produced by the Friends Centre in Brighton to suit the needs of students on a variety of adult courses, like TOPS and New Horizons. Each topic is accompanied by the whole or part of a worksheet and a variety of strategies are demonstrated. It shows how reading materials chosen for their intrinsic interest can become the starting-point for skill development work and the springboard for other ideas. Another useful publication is *Working Together*, subtitled "An Approach to Functional Literacy" published by the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit. This gives a detailed account of the process of working from the identification of an area of interest through the selection of reading material to the devising of skill development activities to cater for specific needs.

Who is responsible?  
What we have outlined depends on working with a small group, which is how much adult literacy provision is organized (or should

- 1 Information of immediate importance to the reader is put first, in the top two-thirds of the page. Information to which the reader may need to refer is at the foot of the page.
- 2 A clear heading tells the reader what the letter is about.
- 3 Bold type, not capital, is used for emphasis.
- 4 The space between lines means that the reader can follow each line without being distracted by lines above or below.
- 5 The space between paragraphs means that they can be seen as a series of separate, yet related, blocks of type.
- 6 All the type starts at the same distance from the left-hand edge of the page (the 'type left'). This gives the type a neat and logical look.
- 7 This important message is emphasized by the direction arrow and the unique position in the margin.
- 8 The type has a ragged right-hand edge (unjustified type). So the space between words is constant and there are no word-breaks at the end of lines. There is an extra space at the end of sentences so that the reader has an extra instant to take in what he has just read.

- 1 The top half of the page and first material which is not immediately useful to the reader, such as his own name and address. The letter has arrived in an envelope marked 'Department of Health and Social Security' so the DHSS emblem and name may not need to be so prominently displayed.
- 2 The type needs to be a mass of letters without obvious organization. There is very little space between the lines, so it is difficult to concentrate on one line without being distracted by those above and below.
- 3 The type is big enough for easy reading. For readers with normal eyesight, type should have an 'x' height of about 1.5mm.
- 4 Continuous capital letters are read more slowly by fluent readers than split and small letters (upper and lower-case). This is because readers get a lot of information about a word from its shape. There is usually more information in the shape of a lower-case word than in the shape of the same word in capitals.
- 5 The type has a straight right-hand edge. This leads to varied space between words and word-breaks at the end of certain lines. It is hard to have the same space between words and no word-breaks.
- 6 This instruction is too small, causing it to lose importance in telling the reader to continue reading the list of documents on the back.

# extra

## Kate, Fluffy and friends

Mary Jane Drummond on a new reading scheme

*Language Patterns*. Edited by Donald Moyle. Holt, Rinehart and Winston Ltd £41.04. (Books and booklets also available separately.)

*Language Patterns* is described in the publisher's persuasive publicity as the "major new Language Arts and Reading Scheme for the 1980s" but it'll take a good deal more than sales figures to convince me that this claim is anything but empty words. Very good words, of course, for selling a scheme that claims to draw on the dramatic new perspectives of Bullock and to offer, for the first time, materials that are based on the idea of reading for meaning. But the infant and first school children who'll read this scheme probably won't read the publicity first: will they be able to tell that these books "integrate the language arts" or "can be used as a basis for designing the content of the curriculum"?

This is a transplant job. Donald Moyle has written 20 little books (16 pages each) at the "Readiness Stage", and two Teachers' Handbooks, and these have been crudely grafted on to ten other reading books, and nine workbooks (with stages 1-3 for five to eight year olds. These books are all based on books originally published by Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada Ltd. Looking down the list of acknowledgements, it's quite a surprise to see, in the major new reading scheme for the 1980s, references to copyright dating from the 1930s. On these Canadian texts, Donald Moyle is described as editor not author, but he seems to have used the red pen quite sparingly. Apart from the inevitable skunks and chipmunks, there are closets, flashlights, moles, bugs, beavers and band-aids to British five and six-year-olds to adapt.

I think that it's the Canadian authors too, not Donald Moyle, who must be blamed for the general outpouring of these texts: goblins and fairies abound, and the exercises in the spelling workbooks are led by a prehistoric team of elves. Another depressing side-effect of their origins is that there's little evidence in the readers of positive approaches to the problems of sex and race. Otherwise I don't think this whiff of North American culture will be a serious problem for British children reading the stories. But some of the phonic worksheets will be very difficult for those children who give certain vowels, "a" in particular, different values from the original consumers. And some of the grammar is rather exotic ("that rat has bit the ham"). In short, calling these books "new" does seem to be stretching a point: however the other claims for the scheme should be taken more seriously.

The *Teachers' Resource Book: Readiness to Stage 3* is a tantalising introduction to the scheme. Read in isolation, it's a stimulating and lucid summary of recent developments in the teaching of reading. Donald Moyle briefly but skilfully describes the philosophical, psychological and linguistic premises on which the scheme is based; more important, he deduces from these premises the basic teaching approaches that are appropriate; and, even better, includes sections on the use in the classroom of the powerful techniques of cloze, modelling and IRI. But as soon as you look up from the manual, and turn to the texts, Donald Moyle's voice loses some of its authority. It's hard to find a passage in the *Teachers' Resource Book* to disagree with, but it's harder still to find passages in the readers that will support Donald Moyle's claims. Here's an attractive bid for recognition: *Language Patterns* provides the opportunity to "recognise and use the personal language needs and interests of each child". And another: *Language Patterns* "relates language learning to realistic activities within the child's life." Of course you can prove anything with quotations, but it is baffling, to say the least, to turn from these pious sentiments to the first three pages of Book One, Stage One: "Sam is a dog. Sam, Sam, sit. Sam. Sam sits." Or a paragraph from Book Two, Stage Two: "Rusty Fox sat sadly on a stump. 'Rie, hic, hiccup, Rusty Rusty. I wish I didn't have the hiccupus' he sobbed."

The more impressive Donald Moyle's arguments are, the more disappointing are the texts, especially stages One to Three, which, incidentally, are unfashionably long: the Stage One readers have a minimum of 64 pages and the Stage Two books run to 224 pages each. They are all multi-author anthologies (except for one Stage Two book *My Tails* which is all about Mac the Rat) and include a few real-life and factual pieces, as well as a number of poems of an almost unimaginable silliness. It's hard to single out one from among so many, but perhaps the last verse of "Bepions" (Stage Two) will do:

"Have you tried to catch a firefly,  
Or trace a shooting star?  
Have you stopped to think how wonderful  
Such simple pleasures are?"

Donald Moyle's own material is much more promising. It consists of ten pre-readers, without text, based on the principles of the *Language Experience Approach*, and ten readers based on the "Story-Method" approach, which corresponds roughly to the Jill Bennett (*Learning to Read with Picture Books*) approach. But there are disappointments here too. The pre-readers, the *Kate and Fluffy Books*, concern a little girl and her scottie dog: Donald Moyle's

intentions are perfectly honourable, but there's a dispiriting banality about the stories. There's a separate handbook for these pre-readers, giving teachers a list of questions they might ask about each picture, and pointing out which aspects of the child's language can best be developed at each point. It sounds marvellous; but the questions are, on the whole, closed and restricting, and many of the comments on language leave me cold: "Opportunities will arise for practice of a variety of pronouns and copulas eg 'feel' 'look' 'seem' and modal verb usage, eg 'must' and 'could' and attributive and predicative adjectives, eg 'let us land on the grassy part' and 'let us land where the ground is grassy'." The ten story-method books are a great improvement and I enjoyed *The Forgetful Lift* and *The Wooden Horse* (as in Troy).

The longer I study this set of materials, the sadder I feel about the time and effort that's gone into their preparation; so much of it is misguided or inappropriate. Take the vocabulary lists in the *Teachers' Resource Book*, for example: a page by page analysis (and there are more than 1200 pages to analyse) of the new words as they appear. But it is really any use, after the very beginning stages? There's also an appendix recording the introduction of new grammatical features, page by page, book by book. So that the teacher is instructed that on pages six to nine of *Animal Friends* (remember? "Sam is a dog" etc) the children should master: "Copula be 3rd. sing. pres. with noun complement, Proper Noun, Imperative of Verb, 3rd. sing. pres. regular and Indefinite Article. There's glory for you."

Even more impressive at first sight is the set of tables showing how the readers and the workbooks fit together, and how they both give rise to "related activities" that integrate the scheme with the rest of the curriculum. This is a brilliant idea, and could have been the salvation of the scheme. As a whole, but when you look more closely there's an extraordinary sameness in the suggested activities; for example, Topic on ligers, Topic on rats, Topic concerning pigs, Topics related to horses or rabbits, are all four from the suggestions for Book One, Stage One (for five and six year olds). To be fair, it is also suggested that they can "design new TV adverts for Esso" as an alternative to a topic on tigers. Will these suggestions really result in a new integration of the language arts into the infant school curriculum? I can't believe it. According to the publicity that arrived with my set of materials, the scheme has, since publication, been evaluated, presumably favourably, by 4000 teachers. Four thousand teachers can't be wrong - or can they?

## Adventure made simple

Quiet as a Num. By Antonia Fraser. Alpha Crime 0 19 424227 7.  
*The Lady Vanishes*. By Ruth Lina White. Alpha Thriller 019 424224 2.  
I, Lucifer. By Peter O'Donnell. Alpha Thriller 0 19 424282 X.  
Flambara. By K. M. Peyton. Alpha General Fiction 0 19 424169 6.  
True Grit. By Charles Portis. Alpha Western 019 424273 0.  
Oxford University Press 70p each.  
Modesty Blaise. By Peter O'Donnell. 0 19 14371 7.  
Slay Ride. By Dick Francis. 0 09 143661 3.  
Hutchinson Bullseyes 85p each.

Simplified novels need care to ensure they are matched up with the right readers. The five new titles in the Alpha series have a readability of eight years or less on a measurement based on the length of words and sentences. Many slow readers who have reached a higher level than this in the mechanics of reading, could

not cope with their length (about 100 pages), the range of characters or the complications of the plot. Antonia Fraser's *Quiet as a Num*, and *The Lady Vanishes*, have been simplified to the point where the sentences jerk and the subtleties are not fully communicated. This is a pity, and narrows their usefulness. A "reluctant reader" able enough to follow the story would also benefit from a richer vocabulary. They seem best suited to EFL students in the early stages of learning English.

I, Lucifer, a Modesty Blaise story with the theme of criminal justice and their protection racket a deluded man who has psychic powers, abridges very well. It is within the seven to eight RA range, but the demands it makes on attention are considerably higher, with shifts to different scenes and sets of characters.

*Flambara* and *True Grit*, more simple in structure, are very satisfactorily adapted; *Flambara* gaining from a slightly larger word-range. The romantic story of the orphaned Christina's relationship with her two boy

coast, one inheriting the hard-riding style of his land-owner father, the other symbolizing a future age of speed, would be compulsive reading for many girls. *True Grit*, a swift-moving western about a 14-year-old girl's revenge for her murdered father, is also compelling, if you are prepared for violent stuff.

Hutchinson's Bullseyes series, which have larger, clearer print and are divided into shorter, titled chapter sections, have a more inviting appearance than the Alpha series. *Modesty Blaise* and *Slay Ride* are both excellently adapted, for a reading age of about eight years. Blaise's and Garvin's enterprise to intercept the under-water theft of diamonds from a ship has a very bloody climax. The exciting *Slay Ride*, about a Jockey Club murder in Norway, has realistic clues which enable the reader to speculate along with the investigator, is free from contrived red herrings, and has enough sympathetic characters to preserve the sense of a world sane in part at least.

Rachel Blake

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# extra

## In the wake of Caxton

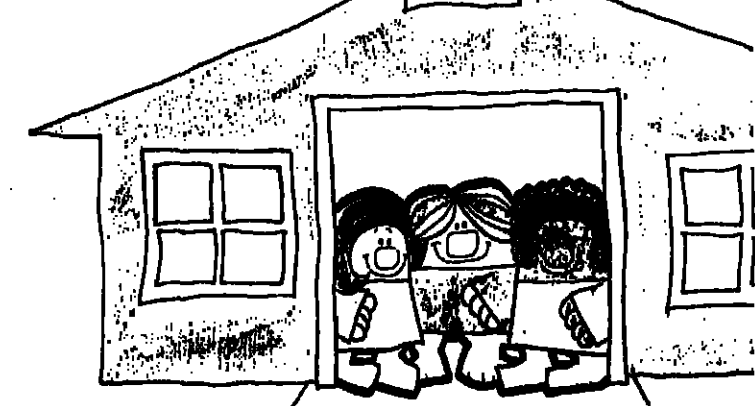
John Bald on technology in teaching reading

The range of technology available to the teacher of reading is considerable, and is expanding. Despite their prominence in debate, microprocessors and computers are only a small part of the total picture, and in educational terms one of the least developed. A brief survey of the use of other types of technology in the classroom may help to put some of the more spectacular recent developments into perspective.

The Bell and Howell Language Master is a sound recorder which plays back a word or a sentence from a strip of tape fixed along the lower edge of a card. The word or sentence is written on the card as well, so that as the user passes the card through the machine, he is able both to see and hear it. The teacher can either select material to meet individual needs or use published cards such as the Ladybird Key Words set, and the machine can be used for mathematics and other subjects. It has been used successfully in various contexts, and can be especially helpful in providing reinforcement for children with learning difficulties. The machine costs £125, but is so popular in schools that many I.C.s have been able to negotiate a substantial discount.

A great deal of technology is still based on printing, and the most common example of this is the primer. There are now a great many of these, and all offer a measured introduction to the complexities of print, based on simplicity of content and controlled vocabulary. In one of the best of these, *One Two Three and Away!* (Hart Davies Educational), the printed stories are supplemented by a set of wooden figures which the child can use to help make up more stories using the characters from the

## At school I like to...



from *Got to be Me*

The immediacy of holding the characters in the hand is very valuable, stimulating both conversation and a sense of involvement.

The technological basis of printed material is more likely to be recognized where it is most conspicuous. Both reading laboratories and the initial teaching alphabet (ITA) involve manipulation of reading and of the mental process involved in it, so that the technology itself is seen as the key to learning.

In reading laboratories, the learner is given the belief that accomplishment of one stage will provide the basis for more difficult work. The process repeats itself until the child reaches the end of the box, when he or she can start the next one. These laboratories have their

limitations, but research and experience have shown that, if used properly, they can help a child to improve the efficiency of his or her reading.

The initial teaching alphabet was an attempt to simplify reading by a phonetic re-casting of the alphabet. The typeface itself became a teaching tool, and once again the idea was to present the complexities of written language to the child gradually in a form which could be understood. The educational problems which resulted were largely due to misconceptions of the way reading is learned and of the nature of written language.

ITA was the purest form of phonics, an approach which concentrated on sound to the exclusion of meaning. Exceptional teachers could make it work, and some still do, but in general application it did real harm. If technology is to be of use to children learning to read, it must be integrated into their work. It must take account of the child's language as well as of the technical aspects of reading.

*Got to be Me* (Argus Communications) is a set of brightly coloured cards, each one of which raises a question which is likely to engage a child in conversation. What is said can then be written into a book - Argus publish their own at 65p each, but a new exercise book will do - and used for reading practice.

The cards introduce a range of thinking, all of it related to the child as a person who would require a great deal of work for a teacher to devise. They offer the additional advantage of attractive, professional presentation. The cards are a good example of the versatility of print-based technology.

The use of a typewriter, especially one with a large typeface, can involve children directly in the produc-

tion process. Their first attempt at a piece of work can be treated as a draft which they wish to improve on before it is typed, and presented either in a bound collection or as part of a wall display. Children appreciate having their work treated with this degree of respect, and the approach stimulates interest in the technical aspects of writing as well as allowing children the harmless pleasure of seeing their names in print. Every school should have one.

The flexibility of this level of technology has great practical advantages for the teacher. A cassette tape recorder, for example, can be used in conjunction with most approaches to teaching reading. Cassettes are not expensive, and in a relatively short time it is possible to build up a body of taped material.

It does not take long to record a story or even a whole reading scheme on to tapes, and it can be very reassuring to a child who is having difficulty to be able to listen to the book as he reads it. This use of technology has the benefit of bringing the child into closer contact with the human voice.

Our approach to microcomputers must take account of the experience gained from these attempts to apply technology to the teaching of reading. We have to examine the new

technology closely to discover what it will and will not do. We will then be able to concentrate on areas where the machines' strengths coincide with our needs. Software produced simply on the basis of unconnected good ideas will not contribute to the coherent approach to reading and writing that we need to develop, and would soon be seen by teachers as a gimmick.

With yet another writer, Alan Garner, that furore of 1943 has been detonating its well-timed explosions throughout his writing career, from *Weirstone* and *Gomrath* through to *Red Shift* ("more know Tom Fool than Tom Fool knows").

The experimental possibility of seeing whether this source of inspiration might work for another generation does not, sadly, exist. The BBC, amazingly, have not retained a copy of any of *The Box* serialisations.

One might quite easily do for film and television what J. L. Lewis did for Coleridge in *Road to Xanadu* by demonstrating the rag-bag of literary

So far, it has been established that small computers are intrinsically attractive to children, that they can provide reinforcement in areas of difficulty, and that they can at their best introduce an entirely new dimension to work in the classroom. These are important advantages, but more is required if computer technology is to become an established part of reading teaching.

It is quite possible to teach reading imaginatively using no more sophisticated tools than books and newspapers, while the most advanced computer is no better than thinking that has gone into its programmes. The use of computers in education raises a number of fundamental questions about the nature of people to machines, but the answers are not always to the advantage of the machine.

The application of technology to teaching reading poses a challenge to both teachers and technical advisers. Computer people are beginning to devote considerable attention to making their machines more usable to children, and have coined the idea with a piece of jargon - "user-friendliness".

Teachers can contribute to this work by identifying areas in which they feel technology could help, and then approaching computer companies or I.C.s advisers directly. They can be assured of a constructive sympathetic response. The value of any application of technology to education lies in its potential in helping children to learn. To do this out, we must involve the teachers.



from *One Two Three and Away*

## Tick, Brick, Money and Plug

**Happy Families.** Miss Brick the Builder's Baby, Master Money the Millionaire, Mr and Mrs Hay the Horse, Mr Buzz the Beeman, Mr Tick the Teacher, Mrs Lather's Laundry. By Allan Ahlberg. Keats £2.50 Puffin 80p each.

This is what might have happened. Someone in Puffin or Keats Books noticed that Allan Ahlberg's first set of *Happy Families* books were selling well and being read with great pleasure by many children in and out of school. But when this someone called Allan Ahlberg to ask for six more books, for some unknown reason he or she added: "Only this time, make them a little less contemporary and relevant will you? Go a little easier on women's lib, and cut down the references to the twentieth century - know what I mean?" So Allan Ahlberg went back to the drawing-board, and this is the result.

The mixture is, in many ways, very much the same as in the first batch, but with one important difference, which has an extraordinarily pervasive effect: the books are set in an older world.

fantasy of genteel Victorian junk, ostrich feather hats, and little boys in sailor suits. These new families do, admittedly, more closely resemble the cast of the original playing cards than the first six in the series, but the loss in relevance is not counter-balanced by the gain in the picturesque. The three illustrations make a marvellous job of this dream world in which teachers wear mortarboards, cooks wear pinnacles, and the little girls wear pinbobs and button boots, but I prefer the social realism of Mrs Plug the Plumber.

There is one apparent exception to the new regime in the Brick family, who wear flat caps and dungarees, but even here the fancy dress keeps reappearing. Mr and Mrs Brick are builders, but their baby shows no aptitude for the trade; instead he decides to consult Great Uncle Brick and set sail in a three-masted steamship to find him among the pyramids, resplendent in monacles, handlebar moustache and solar topees.

The stories themselves are, I think, rather weaker than the first six, but my

own market research at school suggests that children find them quite as entertaining, so perhaps I'm ungrateful. I complain. *Mrs Lather's Laundry* is, we all agree, the best, with *Miss Brick the Builder's Baby* a close second. There's nothing seriously wrong with the others, but there seems to have been a little effort to achieve sexual and racial equality in the text or in the illustrations. Mrs Tick, the teacher's wife, is a school cook and secretary; Mrs Buzz the crook's wife makes tea and washes while her husband is kidnapping Master Money the Millionaire; and there are very few faces anywhere in the whole set. The stories are weakened further by a series of little jokes and references that are intended to appeal to adults rather than children: a full-page illustration of the Brick family's ancestral home, for example, includes Boudicca and King David, all in appropriate costumes. The children just ignore these, and quite rightly so.

Mary Jane Drummond

# extra

## Box of substitute delights

Peter Plummer on the relationship between television and the reading of fiction

Some ten years ago I made an investigation into listeners' memories of a 1943 BBC Children's Hour production: John Kier Cross's serial adaptation of Masfield's *Box of Delights*. Acquaintances in the world of writing and television had so often mentioned this as a seminal imaginative experience that I decided to solicit testimony with a couple of small ads in the personal columns.

The response was a sackful of intimate biographies in which the entire history of career, tastes, friendships, love and marriage was insistently traced back on a thread leading to this single overwhelming radio experience in childhood. All the writers were astonished to discover that it was shared by anyone else.

Apparently the taste for the genre of fantasy had endured, and with it a strong demand for a clearly determined morality in their subsequent reading. A large number of the correspondents had themselves become writers. William Mayne wrote, of the programme's influence on his own work: "I was not ashamed to use the ambience of *The Box* for myself, because I was sure, and still am, really, that no one else had ever heard the broadcasts, so intimately were they my own experience."

When I had earlier read Laura del Rivo's novel, *A Daffodil on the Pavement*, some passages had, quite oddly, evoked memories of *The Box*, so I should perhaps have been prepared for a letter describing her amazement at the extraordinary "delayed action fuse" which the Children's Hour serial had lit in her mind.

With yet another writer, Alan Garner, that furore of 1943 has been detonating its well-timed explosions throughout his writing career, from *Weirstone* and *Gomrath* through to *Red Shift* ("more know Tom Fool than Tom Fool knows").

The experimental possibility of seeing whether this source of inspiration might work for another generation does not, sadly, exist. The BBC, amazingly, have not retained a copy of any of *The Box* serialisations.

One might quite easily do for film and television what J. L. Lewis did for Coleridge in *Road to Xanadu* by demonstrating the rag-bag of literary

influences that fuel the techniques of the screen. This is fascinating: Eileen Stein's self-confessed indebtedness to *Paradise Lost* for the Nevsky battle on ice is an obvious example, and one could mine even deeper. From my own experience, I could offer an instance of Miltonic orthography (the *Orcades* are dumm!) affecting TV studio production techniques (in respect of the precise nasal labial quality of marbled silence). But what seems the most interesting is whether the reverse holds good.

Drama director Barry Davis (one more from the class of '43) once asked me whether I could ever imagine any television programme having the same effect twenty-five years hence as *The Box* had had.

It needs little research to know that any week's best-seller fiction and non-fiction list is overwhelmingly affected by the series, serials and personalities of the current television schedules. Hugh Hebert in *The Guardian* lately quoted a respected literary agent who "glanced down a recent best-seller list and commented mournfully, 'They're all TV and schlock. They're non-books'."

But even this obvious TV knock-on effect needs qualification. Specific effects appear to be extremely short-lived, and the numbers, taken as a percentage of the viewing audience, are extremely small. The IBA's 1980 Audience Research Department report on "Fiction and Depiction" points out that, "Since one per cent of the adult population is half-a-million people, the apparently small or even tiny proportions who have bought or obtained books after seeing a TV series constitute good news for publishers. But they mean relatively little to the public as a whole."

A weighted sample of Granada viewers had been presented with lists of recent serialisations on BBC and ITV and asked: whether they had previously read the book; whether the transmission had led them subsequently to obtain and read the book; and whether they preferred the book or the TV adaptation.

The three per cent of viewers who obtained *Wuthering Heights* after seeing its TV adaptation represented the highest percentage for any of the

fifteen titles quoted. The lowest reactions were for Delderfield's *People Like Us* and Cronin's *Stars Look Down*, whose TV adaptations apparently induced no one in the sample of 620 adults to buy the book. Where people had read the book before seeing the TV adaptation there was only one decisive preference for the adaptation: *Nicholas Nickleby*.

The argument that television adaptations of fiction must stimulate the public's interest in books was not supported by the IBA's findings: "Television has not really functioned as a stimulus to reading, but as a substitute on a really widespread scale". Perhaps adaptations have not been a very persuasive substitute: "Of those small numbers who have bought or obtained works after seeing their TV adaptations, a noticeable proportion have clearly not finished reading them".

These short-term effects don't, in any case, seem to me to matter very much. What does interest me is television's long-term effect on the fantasy facility, the stimulation of which is one of the prime pleasures of reading fiction.

I offer the contentious proposition that the video screen experience is simply not as post-productive as the aural one. Radio drama made the supreme creative demand upon the child. A much quoted letter from a young girl who pointed out how much better the radio scenery was than that on television, is among the best evidence of this. Since the former represented her own act of creation it is scarcely surprising if it was the more enduring.

Brandon Russell suggested recently in *The Daily Telegraph*, that delinquency arises from an atrophied facility for fantasy, and that it is no coincidence that the delinquency rate has increased in those western societies which have moved from the influence of fiction and radio drama to that of television, which "instantly gratifies our senses".

I would argue further that the way in which television gratifies our senses has affected the way in which we read. There seems to be some evidence that we expect the same instant gratification from sentences,

paragraphs and even longer structures. Our reading increasingly becomes a reaction to the first possible meaning that our brain can identify, rather as though we were taking part in a quiz where the first person on the buzzer is the winner. The techniques of *Ask the Family* have succeeded those of *The Brains Trust*.

Two examples of this involve school pupils, and a national newspaper. An intelligent class of 7-8 year olds was asked the question "In the name of the second month of the year, which letter occurs twice?" Obviously a few couldn't spell, but more than half answered "c".

Example Two. The *Daily Telegraph* article mentioned above was illustrated by a cartoon. Presumably the cartoonist either read the article or was briefed with a précis of it. But again, someone pressed the buzzer too quickly. The cartoon makes precisely the opposite point to that of the article.

I have argued elsewhere that the dramatic language of television should be about questions rather than answers. It should, in Brandon Russell's phrase, stimulate fantasy rather than gratify sense. Since it is the most ephemeral of media the temptation is always for word and image to underline each other, but the result of this is likely to be superficial. Since 1960 the influence both of TV commercials and of cinema has been to encourage a more elliptical style of editing, but metaphor remains in short supply.

The only television programme ever to have produced a true cult following (a documented fan membership of more than two thousand who celebrate its memory years after the programme was last shown) was *The Prisoner*, one of the most elliptical series ever screened. Its ambiguities allowed a variety of interpretation and, significantly, when its fans gathered the discussions have a strong literary flavour.

Was this an isolated example? Or was there, twenty years ago, a television experience that sowed as strong a seed in the imagination as *The Box of Delights*? I doubt it. But if you can prove me wrong with any personal examples, please write to me at Granada Television, Manchester. I shall be delighted to eat my hat.

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# Knowing the story

Leila Berg on pre-reading

Watching a seven and a half month-old baby with Jan Pienkowski's *Dinner* (Gallery Five), fingers clutched, whole body pulsating, painting with excitement... and seeing the page playfully held back by the mother to get her peering under the curve of it, head on one side, so eager to see what's next... I think for the hundredth time how extraordinarily we underestimate babies, limiting them to our theories. This baby, a vigorous happy dynamo, will choose to look with enjoyment at as many as six books one after the other, "read" right through. Many books, like this one, are a vivid success with children far younger than those they are "intended for" - particularly perhaps if there are older children in the family, as in this baby's case: "familiar" after all, means "of one's family." One of my grandchildren, then not yet two, was fascinated by Theo Le Sieg's *The Mary Mice of Mr. Brice* (Collins), which I'd bought for her six-year-old brother. It is a delightful book that, through fun and action, leads to actual reading, but for a younger child it invites a touching and a grabbing, and a shouting of words. This toddler's finger movements were by now astonishingly delicate and precise, unlike a clucking baby, and she moved the tabs and turned the wheel with care as well as delight, and plucked new words as she went along.

Pop-up books and finger books of all kinds - Eric Hill's *Where's Spot?* (Hennemann) Eric Carle's *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (Picture Puffin) Roy's *Where's My Baby?* (Chatto and Windus), Pam Adams' *There were Ten in the Bed* (Children's Press) *There was an Old Lady* (Children's Press) *Old MacDonald had a Farm* (Children's Press) like "noises books" Peter Spier's *Gobble Grown Grunt* (Wor-

dsworks) and *Macdonald again* - and all straight animal picture-books that invite spontaneous character-noises from adults - Betty Youngs' *Farm Animals* (Bodley Head) - and song-books of a more tuneful kind with pages in one piece (Elizabeth Poston's *Baby's Songbook*, Bodley Head, and other collections) - all have the young baby very soon participating in one way or another.

Participation with fingers, gums, and licking tongue demands books that are tough, or else so cheap they can easily be replaced. I was sorry Dorothy Butler, in her exuberant *Babies Need Books* (Bodley Head) seemed to play down board books. Their great importance, as I say in *Reading and Loving* (Routledge & Kegan Paul) is that being tough and laminated (therefore wipeable), they can accompany a child through growth, being crawled on, or dragged along by the crawler, toddled over, covered with mush on the high-chair tray... becoming utterly familiar and loved long before the magic of the story inside is comprehended in detail.

Of course you have to look for good ones: some are dingy and dreary; others are aimed at trendy adults. A few years ago, I thought the chirpy Brimex *Show Baby* series, together with Robert Broomfield's more glowing *Animal Babies* (Bodley Head) among the best and the cheapest around; and I find I still do. Among newer ones, I welcome Helen Oxenbury's set of five (*Friends etc Methuen*) - very likeable, and funny without ever cutting down (but can a baby's book specifically on Family work when the Mum, Dad, Sister, Brother, Grandma, Grandpa are not his own?) - and Valerie Greeley's set of four books on animals (*Peis etc Blackie*) of all kinds, unusually exquisite and deli-



One of John Walmsley delightful photographs from *A Tickle*, a simple but by Leila Berg for very young children to look at and talk about with sympathetic adult. This is one of an imaginative new series from Methuen called *Chatterbooks*. Twelve easily handled books by three writers & photographers about everyday subjects and animals. £1.25 each.

I was once reading a bedtime story to a grandchild, then age four. The book was P. D. Eastman's *Are you my mother?* (Collins) (incidentally meant for older ones to learn to read from). I read the first few sentences. The child sleepily raised himself from his pillow, and said accusingly "That's not what is says." "Yes, it does. I'm reading exactly what it says." "It doesn't say that!" He was further off his pillow now. "Yes. Really it does." Aiming to blind him and silence him with science, I showed him the pages. "This is the man who wrote it, Mr Eastman here's his name..." and these are the words Mr Eastman wrote, here.

"My Mummy doesn't say that!" "Well, sometimes Mummies do

change the story. But I don't know what your Mummy says, so I have read what Mr Eastman has written I burbled brightly. He sat right up. With white-hot scorn he said "You're reading the story, and you don't even know it doesn't know the story! Only my Mummy knows the story!" Then he glared at me, stuck his thumb in his mouth, fell back on the pillow, and closed his eyes. My head whirled. For a writer to be told "The man who wrote it, it doesn't know the story" - it was mind-blowing! But wasn't this what always tell parents? "Only my Mummy knows the story!" I wanted to wake him and explain, but he obviously wasn't on speaking terms with me.

## Talking to read: the benefits of discussion

Peter Chilver and Gerard Gould on a scheme to encourage children to manage advanced reading matter

The connexion between talking and learning is of increasing interest to many teachers. In our own work we have recently looked especially at the part played by talking in learning to read. Broadly, our finding has been that good opportunities to talk about what one reads have an absolutely central role to play in the teaching of all subjects at all levels.

Reading tests set out to measure children's ability to read in such a way as to separate what is being read from the particular way in which the child is asked to read it. In other words, the results of such a test are meant to be taken as a good indication of what any particular reader can be expected to read and understand. In essence, a child with a reading age of ten will not make much sense of a passage with a reading-difficulty score of 10.

One result of adhering to this sense of absolute levels of difficulty at the current enthusiasm in all manner of subjects for worksheets designed to reduce to a minimum all the "long words, all the long sentences and all the complications" that might otherwise reduce the pupils' understanding. As a consistent policy we think this is a mistake. Children can read a great variety of literature that is apparently very difficult, and which seems, according to tests, to be far beyond their reading level. Everything depends on their interest in the subject-matter itself, and on the kind of activity which accompanies their reading.

There seem to be four main ways in which teachers can help children to extend their experience as readers, and we repeat that this applies to all facets of the educational spectrum. The first is by reading to children while also telling them read silently to themselves. The second is by rooting the work in the children's own questions. The third is by setting up group discussion of what is being read. And

the fourth is by developing different techniques of note-making to accompany the reading and listening. Generally it is only in primary schools that teachers ever read to a class. In secondary schools, outside the occasional English lesson, it is almost unheard of. Yet because our ability to understand what we hear develops before our ability to understand what we read, there is every possibility for material that they may not yet be able to read for themselves. Also, in this way, they encounter styles of literature which may aid language development.

This opens up rich possibilities not only in the humanities but also in maths and sciences, with teachers regularly introducing children to short extracts from magazines, newspapers, scientific journals, popular texts and so on. Indeed, one part of the teacher's work is to give children opportunities to assimilate. In an introductory fashion, within which any particular subject is embodied.

In effect any passage that is read to a child will begin to be meaningful once it is to some extent *answered* by the child's own questions. The same obviously applies to children reading for themselves. Building on the insights of Frank Smith and his studies of reading and comprehension, we have worked on a number of passages on a range of topics, where we have begun by letting children talk about what they know already and also getting them to formulate the questions they would now like to ask. We have then read to them (or literature that seek in some way to answer their questions. There is no doubt to us that children can in this way begin to come to terms with very advanced reading-matter.

As part of this same activity, group discussion has an important role to

play. Children can become remarkably involved in reading passages together, seeking out the answers to their initial queries, and, in so doing, working out the meanings of often very complex ideas. Some of the best discussions seem to arise when they are asked not only to see how far the passage answers their question, but also to decide what questions they now wish to ask after having read the passage. These may of course be questions directly relating to the passage itself, but may also be questions which reflect ways in which their understanding of the whole topic is now beginning to change.

Such questions are of value not only as ways of linking the child's imagination to any given text, but also as ways of showing the teacher the point the child has reached in his or her thinking, and hence indicating the need for the teacher's strategy.

Equally valuable is group discussion of close comprehension tests, with children working out how best to fill the spaces in an extract from a passage they have already worked on, where, say, every ninth or tenth word has been taken out. Eric Lunzer has explored this type of work very fully in his Schools Council project on *The Effective Use of Reading*. We have found that excellent work can also occur when children make a second attempt at a close test where they have already scored quite well, but now need a remaining mistakes they have made the first time round.

Equally central to the developing of good reading is the whole business of making notes. It would not be unfair to say that in schools generally we have concentrated more on taking notes from the blackboard or writing them down at dictation (than on making notes for oneself). But some kind of note-making is a part of all kinds of learning. In

effect, nothing is ever learned until we have some kind of shorthand summary of it in our minds.

Hence, one way in which teachers can help children to read any particular subject, is by encouraging them to make their own brief notes while reading. Again, this may be linked to note-making for their own questions and to discussing passages together.

One basic difficulty pertains to all kinds of group work, and this is the general absence of models from which children can see what a teacher means by a good group discussion. By and large, the media offer few examples of people discussing anything together in a constructive, friendly fashion. Hence teachers need to explain clearly what they want, and to suggest (and at times illustrate) the social techniques that help a good discussion to get under way - listening to each other, looking at each other, asking open-ended questions, encouraging each other's suggestions, building on each other's, and so on. These cannot be too quickly assimilated. Children have to learn how to talk together by experience.

A second difficulty pertains to the ways in which children relate to the passage itself. All learning has to do with the relating of parts to wholes, and in the case of reading, say, a short extract, this may create a number of rather different problems. The readers may become so concerned with the meaning of a specific word that they fail to relate it to the rest of that particular sentence. Similarly, they may fail to relate that particular word to the punctuation of the sentence, or even mis-read the punctuation. Or they may fail to relate it to the paragraph or to the passage as a whole. Since all reading has to do with the backwards and forwards motion where the meaning is, in effect, in a constant state of flux, such difficulties are very

much to be expected. The teacher can help by pointing them out, and by urging children to keep on reading the whole of a short passage before fixing on what they take to be its meaning. The tendency to ignore the whole in favour of the parts is perhaps most apparent with cloze tests, and here it is generally essential for the teacher to insist that each group keeps on re-reading the entire extract.

Also, teachers as well as children can easily forget that the business of understanding a passage is not only a matter of relating parts of the passage to each other, but also of relating the whole passage to what they, the readers, already know. An article on, say, the French Revolution, makes sense in so far as it both adds to and complements what we already know about history in general and the French Revolution in particular. Hence one other aspect of the teacher's job is to encourage children to talk about what they already know of the subject-matter.

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In other words, the difficulties encountered by children when reading cannot simply be summarized in terms of "reading age" or level of linguistic complexity. Almost all children are able to respond at varying levels to very varied, and often very difficult literature. Being given the opportunity to meet this variety is what learning to read is all about - at all points of the curriculum.

Frank Smith, *Comprehension and Learning* (Holt, Rinehart 1977) and *Reading Comprehension* (Holt, Rinehart 1981). Eric Lunzer and Keith Gardner, *The Effective Use of Reading* (Hennemann 1979).

## Blood flowing in the gutters

Tom Corfe

*The Growth of the British Economy, 1700-1850*. By P. F. Speed. Wheats. £3.75 0 08 024158 1  
*The Making of the Industrial Revolution*. By R. E. C. Burrell. Wheats. seven volumes from £1.80 to £2.90 each; £16.20.  
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*Charlism*. By Edward Royle. Longman Seminar Studies in History series £1.75 0 582 35228 2

Revolutions are fun for the class; and not simply because children lap up the blood in the gutters or identify so naturally with the oppressed resisting pedagogic tyranny. As focal points of history, they positively demand investigation of their roots and background, of the fast-moving sequence of happenings, of the rippling ramifications that follow. Why all the upheaval and overturning? Why does it change and accident pass? The fundamental is the change, how basic the continuity? How fared the common folk beyond the historical spotlight? By what convoluted track-ways do all these exciting events interact?

Even if the marginally less exciting Ind. Rev. is the theme, similar issues and questions thrust forward. "No

revolution has been as dramatically revolutionary as the Industrial Revolution", it has been suggested; and the painful story of industrialization is the key episode to many a course in "Economic and Social". Despite those who argue (in this century year of Toynbee's lectures) that there wasn't a revolution at all, or that it was only incidentally industrial, it seems undeniable that something spectacularly upsetting hit economy and society between the middle of the eighteenth century and the middle of the nineteenth. Our world was turbulently transformed.

This revolutionary episode dominates these books, ignore it though some would. But revolutions are out of fashion, it seems; witness the sober title chosen by P. F. Speed. Time was when we dutifully listed causes-events-results for a single massive abstraction (was it 1760 or 1780 or perhaps '83 when the thing actually hit us?) but nothing so simple is offered here. Instead Mr Speed surveys the multifarious developments in agriculture, industry, transport, demography, finance and so on, one by one. Interrelations are rarely and dimly perceived. Formidable assemblages of densely organized information still leave time to explore such entertaining byways as the fortunes of Dorset button-makers or Robert Tasker's Hampshire iron-works.

Unconventional material abounds. Such well-established figures as that worthy showman Coke of Holkham suffer punctured reputations. Questions check that the text has been properly digested, and references infuriate by listing too many "op. cit." where no op. has ever been cited. Altogether a soundly based but overcrowded book that falls apart disappointingly.

R. E. C. Burrell's seven volumes are ambitious, attractive and aston-

ishing. They do indeed proclaim their theme to be *The Making of the Industrial Revolution*; yet somehow the unfortunate Revolution gets lost once again, submerged this time in a flood of irrelevant trimming. Here is History "because it is there", an impressive assemblage of material with little purpose or discrimination. It is arranged in one "patch", *England 1750*, and four "lines-of-development", which pursue textiles, farming, transport (three books) and crime from prehistory to today, or even tomorrow. In this unwieldy package some major components get lost; the vital developments in iron manufacture with only the briefest scattered references, with scarcely a trace of Darby, Cort or Wilkinson. Appendices make up nearly half of each book; strings of dates that leave few years blank, fascinatingly useless statistics, biographical lists that cover anyone and everyone. Identify these, a sequence picked at random: Oberth, H; Post, W; Read, A; Ruchonnet; Schneider, J; Scott, G. The volume, if you didn't guess, is *Travel in Modern Times*. Is this what exams are doing to our schoolbooks, cramming them with meaningless, shapeless facts and dates?

This is a final disappointment in what might have been an impressive series and still containing very much of interest. Some of the many illustrations are useful and attractive. There are good simple diagrams, and the cover picture of *Villains and Violence* is a joyful discovery, but all too few illustrations are adequately identified or properly used, though practice varies from one volume to another. Intriguing to find a familiar view in *England 1750* labelled vaguely as "A Georgian Terrace". Deceptive. It is in fact a late Victorian street nicely smartened up by Sunderland, corporation.

Where schoolbooks falter the mas-

ter hand of Lord Briggs moves with confidence. *Iron Bridge to Crystal Palace* may not be written for schools, but it is far and away the most useful and attractive book of the bunch. Illustrations, often unfamiliar, are deployed with effortless ease to clarify the text and enhance the story. Why do so many school-boys still ignore the teaching possibilities of contemporary illustrations, vital sources of evidence on this most visual of revolutions? Francis Klingender's *Art and the Industrial Revolution* or Chaloner and Musson's volume in the admirable *Visual History of Modern Britain* long ago showed the way. As they did, Asa Briggs combines text and picture to emphasize the drama of change. He is in no doubt that there was indeed a revolution, and a very spectacular one at that. Contemporaries greeted it with acclaim, admiring the enterprise, ingenuity, vision and effort of those whose careers are here so vigorously dissected, the pioneers who made Britain the envy of foreign observers.

Christine Vialls deals with a different visual story, that told by field monuments and museum exhibits. The Revolution is again, deliberately, relegated to the background, for *Industrial Archaeology* we are assured, embraces almost anything you like to think of from Stone Age to Concorde and Dounreay. This is a rambling, chatty, enthusiastic book for youngsters who might enjoy hunting out and investigating the past around them. Its final exploration of Macclesfield weavers' homes takes in documentary and oral research as well as work with the tape measure.

Joseph Gutteridge also once wrote silk, on the Coventry ribbon looms, and lives in a similar home. This is

the microcosmic history. Then and There does so well, a biographical close-up of the losing side of revolution. Occasional byways (Dorset button again) supplement Gutteridge's story, but in essence this is the tale of one man in the years of change, who both gained and suffered from revolution. In passing it scatters welcome light on such infrequently considered matters as the useful activities of Friendly Societies.

The two Studies booklets, each concerned with ripples of the revolutionary aftermath, are by scholars for their students rather than by teachers for children. Each author treads a dextrous path around his subject's formidably learned literature, and each leaps lightly from one problem to the next, real or imagined. Dr Gourvish is concerned with "the first example of large-scale enterprise" as much as with a "technologically superior mode of transport". Starting from the commonsense (though nowadays challenged) view that railways had an emphatic impact upon society, economy, investment, living patterns, technology and trade, he goes on to take up cudgels in the debate on "social saving", whose dubious value is emphasised by the statistical juggling that can produce alternative answers of £17 million or £147 million to the same sum.

Dr Royle's study of *Charlism* has the advantage of a good story at its heart, while the origins, leadership, purposes, strategy and failure of the movement all lend themselves to question and debate. Here the issues are raised and discussed with clarity, efficiency and economy. Revolutions that fail to happen can be as fascinating as those that do. This one did, after all, get as far as "the most celebrated armed rebellion of the nineteenth century in Britain." More good meat for the classroom.

## Spells for breaking

*Ally, Ally, Aster*. By Ann Halam. Allen and Unwin £4.50 0 04 823192 4.

*Emer's Ghost*. By Catherine Sefton. Hamish Hamilton £4.95 0 241 10619 2.  
*The World Around the Corner*. By Maurice Gee. Oxford University Press £2.75 0 19 558061 3.

"Ally Ally Aster, Snow, snow faster" chants Richard, as an unnatural cold bites deep into the Yorkshire moors. Unlike his sister Laura he refuses to believe that their next-door neighbours the Shores are witches, and Ally - their frigid, uncanny niece - a familiar. Refuses, that is, till he is forced to admit the truth. Then the pair combine to frustrate the Shores' sinister attempts to break a Viking spell and release the ancient treasure from the Shores' element. Ally's desperate fight to break a Viking spell and release the ancient treasure from the Shores' element. Ally's desperate fight to break a Viking spell and release the ancient treasure from the Shores' element.

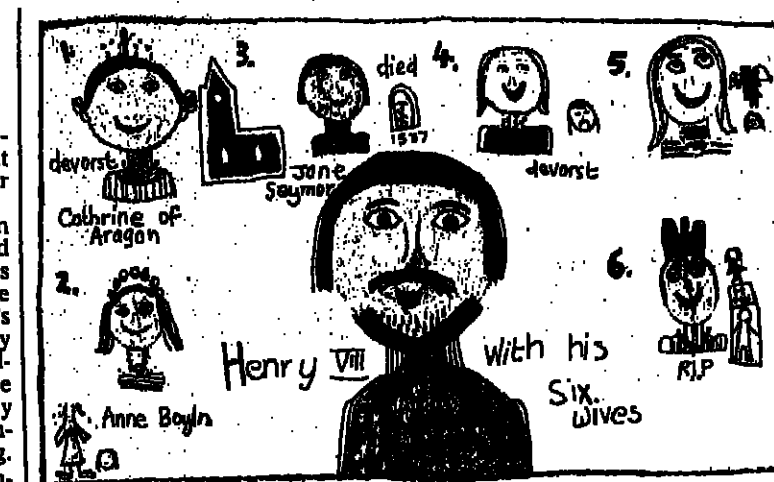
So all is well; except, that is, with the book. *Ally, Ally, Aster* is a frustrating read. Ann Halam has a genuine descriptive gift, she knows how to build tension and she has created in Ally a strangely powerful, sad and frightening figure. But the adults - the Shores, the children's parents, Dr Radleigh the teacher - are conventional stereotypes, and the key dramatic moments fall curiously flat. The plot cracks, its paraphernalia, family legends, knowing rustics, a foolish, evil black witch and a wise, kind white one - familiar from many children's stories of the past. There is a concise, po-

etic quality to the prose which enlivens these tired ingredients, but it cannot free the story from their choking restraints.

*Emer's Ghost* is less chilling than Ally. The shade of a girl who saved St Aidan's Chalice from Cromwell's men leads convent girl Emer to the treasure. In time for the Bishop's visit, the style is simple, the story straightforward, the climax moderately exciting. Not a book for the full-blooded, but professionally done, with a pleasant, markedly non-violent Northern Irish setting. Catherine Sefton, the jacket flap informs us, is really a man, Martin Waddell. He is clearly making a determined effort to fill the niche formerly occupied by Ruth Arthur.

*The World Around the Corner* is a more lacklustre affair than Ally, Ally, Aster, and less nicely judged than *Emer's Ghost*. New Zealander Maurice Gee is an experienced novelist, but he is clearly unsure what will appeal to a pre-teen audience and unwilling simply to trust his own taste. When Caroline finds a pair of magic glasses, she sees the world as it really is. The glasses belong to the faeries, who must get them back to enable this year's moon-girl to fight the dragon steeped in the terrible Crimbles to lay waste to fairland. The faeries are such a weak-kneed bunch that most readers will be rooting for the dragon, but Caroline knows where her priorities lie. To save the moon-girl she dives into a flooding torrent with nothing but a blown-up tyre to support her. A friend sees her being swept along. "Help!" she cries; but no help comes; nor is the incident referred to again. New Zealand parents and authorities clearly take this sort of joke in their stride.

Nell Philip



All About the Royal Family, by Phoebe Hitchens (Macmillan £4.95) is an unusual spin-off of wedding mania. Full of information, humour and children's contributions.

## Right-down regular Royal Queen

*The Queen and Her Court: A Guide to the British Monarchy*. By Jerrold M. Packard. Robson Books £7.50.

Hurrah for an American who can grasp the niceties of the English social system: many of the natives can't. Mr Packard will never be guilty of the common little solecism by which, say, "Ada Smith" (the wife of Sir Joe Smith and therefore plain Englishman) could bring himself to be. Thus we find it asserted that reviews as "Lady Ada Smith", transformed overnight into the daughter of an earl at least. In small matters as in great Mr Packard is the most accurate of observers. His excellent book, though meant to doubt for Americans intent on beholding, or perhaps attending, the royal wedding, should on no account be overlooked by British readers.

He can tell most of us plenty: the line of succession to the throne, who gets "HRH" and who doesn't and why, how the various royal households are constituted, even the layout, room by room, of entire floors at Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle. The answers to most of the questions an outsider is likely to ask will be found here.

As a free-born American writing for other Americans Mr Packard is sometimes more forthright than an Englishman could bring himself to be. Thus we find it asserted that such and such a royal personage is unpopular, that the Prince of Wales has no very high opinion of his brother-in-law, that Princess Margaret once haughtily declared "My sister copes very well with press demands." His description of an equerry's position will give the English reader particular pleasure: "kind of a male lady-in-waiting." Of course, but

I doubt if it has ever before been put in quite those words.

He follows his account of the royal family's constitutional and public activities by enumerating their manifold privileges and possessions and explaining what many of the Queen's subjects regally fall to understand - the origin and working of the Civil List. Distinguishing between nobles and aristocrats (and explaining the use of courtesy titles) he eventually lists the complete peerage, together with their family names. His one significant Americanism is the instruction to address dukes as "Your Grace" and the lesser orders as "My Lord". Except on the most formal occasions only servants (those that remain), old-fashioned tradesmen and punctilious American visitors are likely to employ these terms.

Jan Stephens



# Seen at the zoo

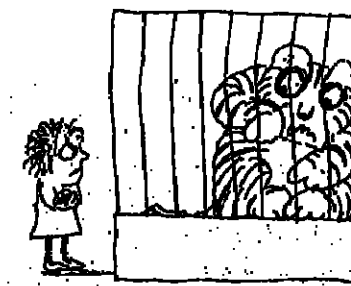
Claire Hardisty on educational services in zoos



There are about 130 collections of animals, fish and birds in Britain, varying in size from one third of an acre to 3,500 acres. Many of these are entrepreneurial and small scale, and only few provide an educational service, although some negotiate enterprising links with local education authorities and produce good work-sheets.

The regional Zoological Societies established in the last century have an educational function, and many are now registered as educational trusts with charitable status.

The London Zoo has a purpose built education centre run in conjunction with an ILEA teachers' centre. It has three lecture halls, preparation and animal room, and a classroom as yet unused. The department offers a package for school parties: a lecture from a member of the education staff with tape, slide or film; skeletons, shells and horns to handle as appropriate; and then a worksheet to be taken into the zoo. Geared predominantly to 11-13 year olds, the topics are listed in a twice yearly catalogue.



Work is planned in partnership with Whipsnade, with secondary school programmes in the summer term at Whipsnade, juniors in the autumn and winter. Junior programmes are offered at London Zoo in the summer term, secondaries in autumn and winter.

Worksheets are available for photocopying by teachers at four ability levels for junior, and three levels for secondary pupils. The most popular is *Classification* which relates to Nuffield biology studies. For 14-16 year olds, O-level, CSE, and non-academic programmes are available. Small study groups with lecture notes are offered to A-level students. With ILEA, sixth form enrichment courses are held. Disabled students are offered talks on suitable subjects by arrangement.

The department, headed by Michael Boorer, has been experimenting with comparative labelling, for example drawing a London Transport double-decker bus in the giraffe house, and is creating new factual animal notices and talking labels. An innovation is tours for infants, in groups of not more than ten, led by highly trained volunteers. The emphasis at London in the groups I saw was to persuade the children to look and talk.

Entrance is £1.15 at London, 90p at Whipsnade, for school parties with one teacher free per 10 children.

Bristol Zoo has an education centre with a series of helpful booklets for teachers planning a visit, with suggested topics, activities, discussion points and follow-up work and worksheets for children which cost 6p. Slides can be borrowed free (20p postage). School parties enter for 72p with an adult-free with every 15 children.

Dudley Zoo has two teachers, a classroom and an exhibition area. A programme of illustrated talks can be adapted for most age ranges and abilities. 'Meet the Animals' for nursery and infant children takes place in the Children's Corner. Specific projects can be arranged. Slides on loan are available prior to a visit for 20p postal charge, together with teachers' notes for preparatory work. Printed and stapled 4-page workbooks on topics through the age ranges are carefully graded, informative, entertaining and beautifully drawn, relating well to programmes of study and follow up work. For 11-13's *Classification* ties in with Nuffield Science Project work. Entrance fees are 70p per child, with an adult free per 15 children. Special rates and programmes are available for disabled children.

Chester Zoo has a classroom and one education officer. Short introductory talks may be booked from a set topics list for different age groups in the summer term, and longer particular subject sessions with visual aids and relevant animal visits with guide in the winter terms. Pictorial subject leaflets are available for 5-7's at 5p, and 12 page booklets rather fortuitously entitled *Junior Educational Questionnaire Under 8 Years*, and *For Over 8's*, at 15p each. A comprehensive 32 page A5 size booklet *Introducing Animals* explains *Classification* and *Orders*, describes working days in the zoo and covers endangered species and evolution. Good value at 20p. Information sheets to accompany talks are also available. School parties pay 65p for children under 16, with one adult at half price with every five children.

Malcolm Whitehead at Twycross Zoo, Leicestershire, offers help to teachers in the form of a flow chart, teachers' notes, resource sheets and books, guided tours, animal demonstrations, talks and slides in winter. A complete Teacher's Pack containing information on coloured paper have clear drawings and self checking answer sheets, and a wide variety for all ages and abilities are available. Classes can sponsor or adopt a bird, animal or reptile. Worksheets of daily diet with costs are clear, and could usefully extend classroom work. The department runs an annual art competition. School party entry is 50p with one adult free for every 15 children.

At the two major Scottish zoos finance and staffing are on a different basis from those of the English Zoological Societies, allowing a flexible and possibly more experimental approach.

Stephen Boslock, Education Officer at Calderpark Zoological Gardens, Glasgow, has no permanent staff. He is aided by graduates through the Scottish Temporary Employment Programme, who help with talks, preparation of material and visits. Much work is done in schools, and bones, skulls and skins are taken as well as slides and specimens and a very popular python.

Lectures on 28 topics are available, and guided tours of the zoo. There are work sheets and information sheets, teachers' notes suggesting themes and topics for visits, and lists of animals, fish, birds and reptiles on display in the zoo. There is a good *Classification* and *Diversity* booklet, a series of excellent drawings, and interesting matrix format sheets on animal lineages, and in relation to man. Best of all is a series 'How to Draw' 'anyone may learn to do this' is the claim. I followed through the four-sheet exercise and produced a passable leopard.

The zoo has a grant which means that school parties from Strathclyde have free entry, with a nominal booking fee of £1. Special programmes for disabled children are arranged.

Edinburgh Zoo has five classrooms, a lecture theatre and bookshop in a purpose-built complex. Aided by a £4.4 grant entry for Lothian children is free. For those outside entry is 72p plus 10p for the Zoological service. A programme is published twice a year, offering about 30 topics suitable for nursery, infant, primary, and senior

children. Senior topics are general or syllabus orientated. Interlink courses involving the Zoo, Botanic Gardens and Museum are offered at senior level, and with the Forestry Commission, Pentlands Hills Ranger Service and the local Cat and Dog Home for juniors. There is an animal adoption scheme too.

Comprehensive and well illustrated work sheets together with teachers' notes are available at all levels. Printed information on stiff folded coloured paper on individual animals are thorough and pleasing. A Teacher's Pack with sample worksheets is offered, with a Topic Feedback Sheet for completion by teachers after the visit.

One of the classrooms is an Infant Room. Here groups of between eight and 15 children sit in a semi-circle on logs. Animals are introduced individually and the children encouraged to talk - how it feels, shape, colour, movement and so on. Rabbits, guinea pigs, tortoises, stick insects, newts and hedgehogs are employed. Project sheets can be completed here or back at school. I particularly liked *The Natives*, which invites a cross, tick, or circle for those animals touched, liked, disliked and seen. A session is completed by visiting the Children's Farm where animals are fed and stroked by the children.

The Education Officer, Robert Ollason, also runs 'Behind the Scenes' courses for academically less able pupils. These involve talks about aspects of zoo-keeping: the work of the Works Department, Catering and Education Centre, as well as animal study, food preparation and voluntary cleaning up of some animals. Visits are followed up by work sheets for use back at school.

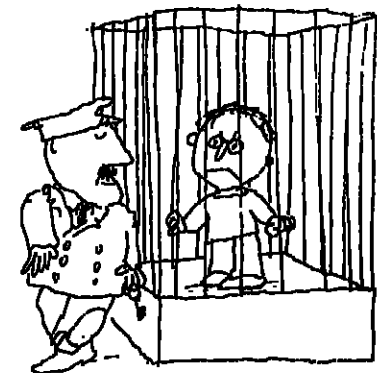
At Jersey Zoo Phillip Coffey prefers to focus the attention of children by gathering them together for a talk. He then provides an accompanied tour, eliciting from the children their own observations and encouraging maximum participation. Writing is for the classroom afterwards. Generally he does not use worksheets, although he will provide one if specifically requested. He has a very successful bi-lingual work booklet for Jersey children's French exchanges. Children can handle skulls and skins as appropriate and some animals. Most popular is Silent Cyril the snake! Information sheets have animal pictures, habitat maps and details.

The zoo has worked with the Channel Islands Broadcasting Service to produce a series of Schools Broadcasts on Zoo Studies. Having an ILEA grant, local children enter the zoo free, but

residential courses. Each topic work-sheet has a follow-up suggestion sheet containing a summary of points, ideas for further work, and are available at work levels from seven to 15 plus. A special trail has been created for the visually handicapped. Cassette recorders and cassettes are loaned with Braille instruction cards.

When students arrive they feel a collection of stuffed and model birds and hear bird sound prior to the trail. Along the route are stopping points with Braille labels. About a mile in length, it would take ten year olds two hours to complete. Parties for this and all educational visits are charged 65p with one adult free per 15 children. Slides are available at 75p.

Martin More, in Lancashire, have two large classrooms, preparation rooms and a laboratory as well as a lecture theatre, built with a ILEA grant. Well staffed with teachers and auxiliary help, they are able to provide general tours, talks, slides and films. There is a handling collection. Sketch-



book worksheets consist of black and white printed line drawings for colouring, a 'Looking At' and 'Topic' series, ranging from infant to secondary ages. Instruction sheets 'Make a Downy Duckling' and colouring competitions are for taking home. Lancashire and Wigan children pay 35p, others 45p with free staff entry for 15 children. There are also education departments at Washington, Arundel and Peulark.

Marwell Zoological Park, near Winchester, a Preservation Trust with charitable status, is a breeding zoo with over 800 animals. It has an education department and enthusiasm but no centre as yet. Talks and tours are available by special request and teachers can seek advice. There is a study sheet for top juniors, with answers, several information sheets at 10p and a printed *Quizzes and Games* booklet for the Children's Zoo at 5p. The zoo has a children's club and an animal adoption scheme. Children enter for 60p with one teacher free with 25 children.

Blackpool Zoo has an education officer and classroom and will provide talks on any subject. Information is provided for teachers to make their own worksheets and group entry is 35p with one adult free per 10 children.

Drusillas Zoo in Alfriston, Sussex, is a small privately owned zoo. For some years Michael Ann has been convinced that a visit should have more than an outing and should have an educational content. With a local headmaster as honorary adviser and assistance from the County Rural Studies Adviser he has got a number of enterprising schemes off the ground, including Half Term Happenings - talks, make-and-model sessions, and games; twinning with Oakland Zoo, California; and a school membership of which gives free group admission, newsletters, posters and animal badges. It costs 50p per person.

Education is one of the principal aims of The Wildlife Trust. The Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, at Slimbridge, Gloucestershire, provides a printed booklet of services for schools, including bibliography, film titles, discovery sheets, topic synopses and details of



The Safari Parks while not formally educational can be a wonderful experience. For realism five rhinos came down a hill at you while you ate; sandwiches separated from you by three bar green fence takes a beating! Structured learning is a variable commodity. Woburn Wild Animal Kingdom, largest of the drive-through parks, there are questionnaire sheets for schools to duplicate.

Available for three age groups, 9-13, and 13-18. On the 5-9's questions are basic - labelling drawings, filling in names, a dot-matrix picture and a crossword puzzle. School parties the rate is 60p with adult per 15 children. Within the other activities - dolphinarium, pet corner, boat trips etc, cost extra. It is a picnic area but no guided tour classroom.

At Longleat Safari Park the rate is 90p and one teacher free with 25 children. There is a free information sheet for teachers, but worksheets for juniors, and senior schools are 10p. Boats, pets, aquarium, as well as special exhibitions are extra.

At Kewley Safari Park there are twelve major species on view. With large unimproved area as well, it is to have a good day out. School rate 50p per child, 30p for disabled children. Pet's corner, amusement and dolphinarium extra. The sound magazine contains beautiful photographs (suitable for classroom walls) with brief factual summaries about the animals. There are information and work sheets. These cost 44 factual written questions. Guided tours are offered in the winter term. Post-graduate and teacher students use animals on a regular basis by arrangement and have access to the collection.

Windsor Safari Park has a purpose built education centre. A large room has a display screen on one wall with attractive painted animals surrounding the projection area. A fed tiger stands guard by the plants and terrapins clamber in a pool. A table with feathers, a mouse, a toad, a snake and a Rhesus monkey, tusk and a Rhesus monkey skeleton attract the children to the entrance. After a talk with slides and a film, children visit a museum. Thoughtfully arranged, contains material relevant to levels of work. A collection of adjacent to a section on endangered species and conservation are represented, as well as a poignant collection of animal skeletons and parts in formalin. 'Why do we move?' asked one small girl. 'To get to the museum' answered the teacher.

continued on next page

## Computer Books

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continued from previous page.  
and claws can be picked up. One problem is stopping teachers saying 'Don't Touch'. When I was there a stuffed lion attracted much tender stroking from a group of six year olds as well as bravados who put their hands in its mouth and recoiled in dramatic horror.

An infant party who had visited the dolphinarium had a talk and some slides about dolphins. Another group looked at a dolphin brain and compared it with a human brain.

For schools the rate is £1.20 and includes Dolphin Show, with one teacher free with each 10 children. This includes use of the education centre. In the winter it also includes a lecture, film show and guided tour, but in the peak summer period only one facility is offered. There are seven lecture topics as well as good work-sheets in three general age groups, 5-7, 8-9, 10-12. There is a Museum Quiz and Safari Park Quiz, as well as teachers' notes for planning a visit. The education officer, Kim Steele, hopes to develop links with local schools. She has held a science teachers' evening, and plans an Open Day for primary teachers.

At Paignton Zoo last week the education department were involved in mounting a week long 'Adaptation' exhibition at Plympton Comprehensive School. Related to the syllabus it showed skulls, teeth, beaks and feet and slides of habitat. It had involved the creation of labelling and quiz sheets. The department has two classrooms with a small resource library of books and slides.

The rooms are filled with skeletons, stuffed animals, snake skins, furs - all

for touching, smelling and holding. Sessions consist of a short talk selected from a long list of 'Basically Primary' or 'Basically Secondary' topics, with a visit to the appropriate animals. Lively and well illustrated high quality black and white printed work sheets to focus looking are available. Some emphasise unexpected aspects of zoo work, for example 'Cage Detectives'. Menu and Cost sheets for animals, a comparative animal speed picture and animal language as well as a Zoo Quiz, Habitat Sheets, Tails, Faces, Feet, Ears, are appealing and demand attentive answering and colouring in. 'Colour and Pattern' has an accompanying teachers' booklet for follow up work.

One day courses are arranged for sixth formers, and during autumn and winter terms weekly residential courses are arranged for all age groups. In conjunction with the local Schools Television Service the zoo is making a programme linking real zoo animals to mythical beasts in church architecture. The zoo receives a ILEA grant, and last winter the zoo and education service was free to all Devon children. The usual rate for school parties is 60p.

Final words must go to Jan Hatley, Education Officer at Paignton Zoo, and this year's President of the International Association of Zoo Educators. She believes that it is the function of zoo education departments to see the wider use of the zoo as a resource. She talks of the scope of the zoo as a stimulus for language and creative writing, foreign language work, mathematical studies, and even history in relation to man, as well as art, music and drama. 'You can teach anything in a zoo', she says, with abundant enthusiasm.



Mongols on their way to the Nadama fair.

## Chinese chequers

by Caroline Mendham

### EXHIBITION

#### China Today

Photographic Information, Centre, 84 Newman Street, W1P 3LD. Until July 31.

China is a land of enormous contrasts: in the terrain; in technology and industry, and in the ways of life and thought. *China Today* is a wide and comprehensive display reflecting this variety in 179 excellent colour and monochrome pictures by Chinese photographers. Informative captions have been appended to the photographs.

The recent technological progress made by the Chinese is very much in evidence. Considering the proximity of the Cultural Revolution, it is rather amazing that they should have managed to produce sophisticated television sets, advanced engineering methods in oil fields, and hydroelectric power. Yet much of their agriculture remains at a picturesquely primitive level. A photograph of bamboo transportation shows long chains of arrowhead-shaped log bundles, each guided by a man with a punt pole.

While the photographs of Chinese progress in military and technological matters are interesting, they show a

close approximation of Western culture. Photographs of marquetry processes at furniture factories, or of the making of brocade silk and silk carpets, are much more exotic to the Western eye.

The historical pictures convey a deeper impression of the real China. A portrait of the Mou Chou Maid statue mirrored in a lake; the Goachang ruins against a blue sky - a mass of honeycombed, honeycombed rock, once an ancient city but uninhabited for 600 years; these are among the more memorable items in the exhibition.

Some lively glimpses of Chinese personality are offered in this exhibition. Whether in a picture of young girls dancing in colourful costumes, or of two small girls in a primary school looking just like grannies, the overall impression is one of mischief combined with great wisdom. Even babies have this look. On the level of total seriousness, a Young Pioneer has been photographed at work on his own model of a supersonic fighter, absorption oozing from every pore.

Great care has been taken to cover as wide a range of subjects as possible in this exhibition, so it would not be complete without some interior and gardens. Palaces and pavilions, with their ornate exteriors and intricately carved and painted interiors, make fascinating viewing, as do the tranquil gardens alongside shining stretches of water.

# Successful scenes

'James is our Brother', a documentary in the Scene series, is being shown on mainstream television this weekend. Carolyn O'Grady talks to the producer and discusses other award-winning productions in the series

Very few schools programmes find their way onto mainstream television, usually because they are simply not suitable, being made for clearly defined educational purposes. However, some programmes achieve such a brilliant general reputation that they do eventually turn up in a peak viewing slot. Such a programme is *James is Our Brother*, a documentary which was very well received when it was broadcast six years ago, won the British Academy of Film and Television Arts award for the best educational programme of the year in 1975, and which will be broadcast on July 28 on BBC 2 at 6.50 p.m.

*James is Our Brother* is a programme in the highly acclaimed 'Scene' series of dramas and documentaries. Aimed at 14-16 year olds 'Scene' has acquired a solid reputation among teachers for the quality of its productions. It is admired in particular for its courage, both in the choice of subjects and the way they are handled.

The latest 'Scene' drama, *Judo Champ* which was broadcast in May, was a good illustration. Ostensibly its subject matter was hardly as controversial as, say, *Scene in Northern Ireland* or *The Kids are OK*, which is about divorce (both of these also won BAF-TA awards). *Judo Champ* looks at a crisis in the life of John who has a talent for judo. But the techniques of judo is not what the play is about (Roger Tonge, the producer, admits that the sport was chosen because the very talented young actor James Morrison happens also to be a judo champion).

The theme of the play is John's struggle to define his own view of success in a very competitive world. The producers hope that the play will provide thought and discussion on subjects such as competitiveness, violence and personal integrity. Discussion is ostensibly what 'Scene' is all about. But it is a matter about which Roger Tonge has misgivings. 'Often', he says, 'teachers feel that if they don't get a fast moving discussion going immediately the broadcast stops they or the play have failed. They should trust the kids own responses and sometimes leave them be'. The theme might emerge in a later discussion or not at all but either way is no indication of success or failure.

Tonge's apparently relaxed attitude to the use of his programmes is not a sign of detachment from his audience. His approach to his programmes is far from 'take them or leave them', in fact the best part of making plays or documentaries, he says, is seeing them with the kids at the end.

It is often said that producers in mainstream television are totally absorbed with the highly specialized level of criticism they can expect from their colleagues and the media critics. 'Scene' producers are apparently as absorbed with their au-

dience and its needs. Tonge has worked with children most of his working life. He was a teacher for many years, has worked in youth clubs and is a governor of a North London School.

He describes one of his main objectives as to 'unnerve his audience - to needle them' hopefully into seeing problems from new perspectives and into examining their own attitudes to life. Sometimes this needling can be harsh. One school with about 50 per cent of its intake from one-parent families considered that *The Kids are OK* was too painful an experience and won't show it. A decision which Tonge respects.

*The Kids are OK* sensitively and realistically looks at the effects of divorce on the members of one family. It doesn't apportion blame and doesn't fight shy of the anguish. It ends, after the attempted suicide of one of the children, on a guardedly optimistic note. The children, we feel, have begun to find their strength. It is well acted and beautifully observed, but there is no doubt that in a divorce-prone society it would need careful and sensitive handling in the classroom.

*Scene in Northern Ireland* is another of Tonge's more controversial subjects. This documentary examines the attitudes of one group of Catholics and another of Protestants towards each other. Predictably they claim to hate each other, even though they admit they have never met, but in the course of the interviews and discussions insights into group pressures, individual fears and the part of boredom and frustration in the violence emerge.

Later the groups are brought together on 'neutral territory'. The hatred and fear diminishes greatly, and though both sides refuse to draw general conclusions from the episode, reasoning that members of the other group are exceptions to the rule, some prejudices have obviously been undermined. 'I could change more if I got to know them better', says one, and another comments that 'the prejudices will harden when we get home, but I have enjoyed the weekend and you can't take that away from me'.

*James is Our Brother* is a sensitive look at how James, a mongrel boy copes with life and how his family copes with him. The answer is very well indeed - in fact probably better than most in both cases. But this in no way detracts from the value of the film which gives youngsters and adults a chance to relate to a mongrel child and his family in a way which hopefully may make them more sensitive to the needs of other mentally handicapped people and their families. It is well worth viewing, especially for the interview with the older James - added to the film some years after - when he has won a medal at the Handicapped Persons Olympics and looks to the future.

## Traffic jam of classic cars

by Martin Goldsmith

The History of the Motor Car Six 25-minute colour films made by the British Petroleum Company. Thames, Mondays, 5.15 pm. Also available on free loan in 16mm and 35mm from The Petroleum Films Bureau, 4 Brook Street, London W1Y 2AY.

For automobile enthusiasts, *The History of the Motor Car* constitutes two and a half hours of heaven. There is not a great deal there for the rest of us; but then, there are a lot of automobile enthusiasts. And this series of six films, covering the whole period from the earliest steam-powered prototypes to the energy-crisis of the 1970s, does make a sincere attempt to relate its subject to the general history of society in the same period.

But although the history of the car may be mounted on a socio-economic chassis, it is quite independently sprung. Ninety per cent at least of the screen time is filled with juicy footage of beautiful vehicles, freed for the occasion from the museums they usually inhabit. The series makes a point of showing the cars in their natural surroundings, so to speak, and in some approximation techniques are used to enhance what is fundamentally an extended traffic jam of classic cars: period-dressed drivers perform little vignettes as the commentary slips us the technical data.

free loan.

The history of the car is a facet of social fashion; it clearly reflects boom and depression, war and peace, the shift of power and money between classes. It also offers a finely focused example of a developing technology and of the complex relation between technical absolutes and social relativities, the cultural forces which define the use and application of technology.

But all this may be making rather heavy weather of what is essentially a beauty parade - including, especially in the early days, an admixture of the freakish and the unbelievable. The research is superb and the presentation lavish. But there is something both smug and depressing about the last sentence of the last film's commentary: 'The only certainty is that the history of the motor car will not be finished for a long time to come'.

# Briefings

Radio and tv

## Open University

*The Ghost Sonata* (Saturday, 11.25, Monday, 06.40 BBC2)

A performance of the final two 'movements' of Strindberg's chamber play. Scenes from the first movement are included as flashbacks. Joseph Connor plays Hummel, a crippled businessman exposing the secrets of those around him. *Islam in Bolton* (Sunday, 8.55, Thursday, 18.30 BBC2)

How do modern textile factories cope with the religious demands of their immigrant workers? Taylor's of Bolton have accommodated the numerous Moslem calls to prayer by building a prayer room in the mill. *The Date Book* (Sunday, 10.10 BBC2)

A demonstration of the advantages and disadvantages of the query language, QLP, and its usefulness to the firm of John Brown at the oil terminal in the Shetlands.

## CE and general interest

*Get By In Italian* (Sunday, 16.00, Friday, 23.30 VHF4)

A quick beginners' course for holidaymakers and businessmen to make sure they can cope with everyday situations.

*Poking in the Eighties* (Sunday, 19.30 Radio 4)

Presented by William Woollard, this series examines the workings and attitudes of the British police. *A Home of Their Own* (Monday, 23.00 VHF4)

A series of case studies each dealing with a different aspect of fostering. Special emphasis is placed on new areas, such as fostering physically and mentally handicapped children.

*Self-Portraits* (Tuesday, 23.00 VHF4)

How do young people become responsible adults? A group of young people discuss their difficulties and solve the turning points which helped them towards adulthood. *Getting Together* (Friday, 23.00 VHF4)

A series to encourage people to get together in groups and communities to work for the benefit of themselves and others.

*Coal Film Makers* is a new publication from the National Coal Board, who apparently were among the first industries to sponsor film making, and who were also in at the early days of documentary.

The spiral-bound book contains a great many anecdotes about Coal Board film makers, several of whom later became well known. *Coalface* employed both W H Auden and Benjamin Britten. There is also some technical information presented in a popular style.

Though minutely detailed and told with pally bonhomie, the stories in *Coal Film Makers* could well be of interest to people studying the growth of the documentary film and of sponsorship. It costs £1 from Film Branch, National Coal Board, Hobart House, Grosvenor Place, London SW1X 7AE.



























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## OXON

## CASTLE PHOENIX COLLEGE

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## OXFORD

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## Educational Courses

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